

OXFORD

TOWARDS FREEDOM

Documents
on the Movement
for Independence
in India

1947

Part 1

edited by

Sucheta Mahajan

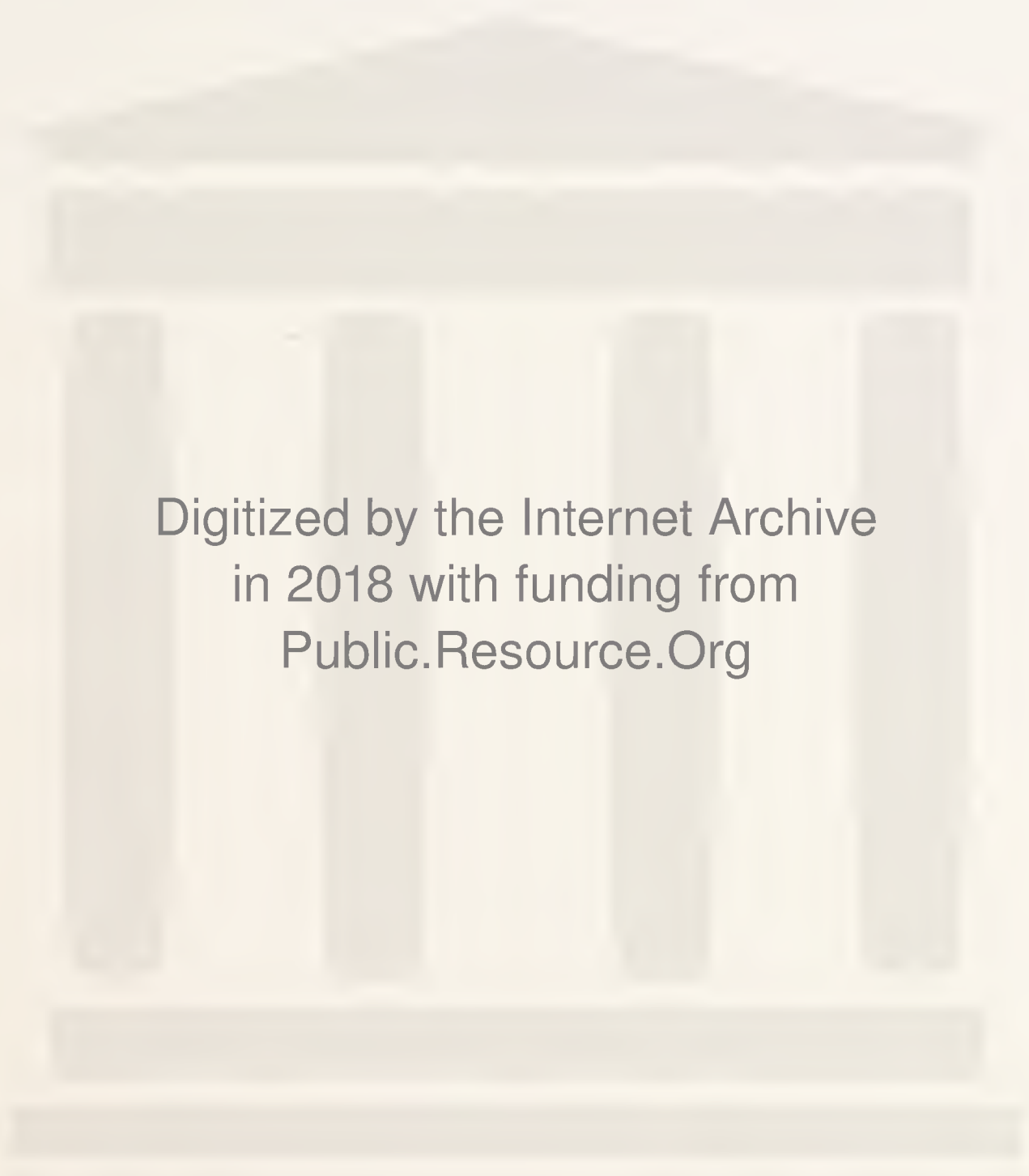
TOWARDS FREEDOM

Documents on the Movement for Independence in India, 1947 Part 1

Going beyond the legalistic notion of independence as a 'transfer of power', the *Towards Freedom* series documents within the overarching framework of the 'movement for independence' the largely unaddressed discourses on the struggles for social justice, economic empowerment, and cultural autonomy. Through meticulously selected historical material from the period 1937–47, relating to the activities, attitudes, and ideas of diverse sections of Indian society, it brings to the fore the varied contributions to the attainment of independence.

This volume, published in three parts, systematically covers the major socio-political developments during 1947, the year that saw the end of colonial rule and the emergence of two nation states. The first part pertains to the main political developments that took place in the three-way conflict between imperialist, nationalist, and communal forces. This story continues in the second part, which takes up the question of the princely states, the settlement of boundaries, and the rehabilitation of refugees, while the third traverses the issues of caste, religious minorities, language and literature, educational policy, the position of women, the future of the Congress organization, the functioning of provincial ministries, the economic consequences of partition, and the peasant and working class movements.

The documents in this part present multiple points of view, represented by a range of sources, from newspapers, private papers, institutional collections, speeches, and writings of principal players to colonial archives. The striking level of popular involvement in important issues is reflected in the delightful letters to the editors, maps of proposed boundary lines, cartoons with acerbic wit, and quaint advertisements, such as the one for a balm, titled 'Freedom from Pain', evidently inspired by the impending freedom of the country!



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Towards Freedom

ICHR: Towards Freedom

General Editor

Sabyasachi Bhattacharya

Volume Editor

Sucheta Mahajan

Towards Freedom

Documents on the Movement for Independence in India
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With a Preface by the General Editor

Sabyasachi Bhattacharya

Indian Council of Historical Research

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*To my parents,
Vidyadhar and Savitri*

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General Editor's Preface

It gives me great pleasure to place in the hands of readers the tenth and last volume of the *Towards Freedom* series of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR). The project taken up by the Council many years ago is at last approaching completion. Since the volumes in the series have been published at intervals of months and sometimes years, a part of the General Editor's duty has been to state at the beginning of each volume the objective and the general guiding principles of this endeavour. I shall address that task first and then share with the readers a few thoughts which crossed my mind as I read the present volume.

The agenda of an endeavour such as this series defines itself in part through editorial practice and partly through attempts towards a statement of objectives. The historical context in which this project developed initially is generally known. While we must not overestimate the influence of that historical conjuncture on the academic inputs which went into the making of the project's agenda, one has to take that into account as one of the formative factors. After the vertiginous years leading to 1947, there came a time when historians turned their attention to those years and archives began to acquire and provide access to source materials. The last years of 'British India' began to be addressed by professional historians and indeed the theme attracted national attention both in India and in Britain. In June 1967, the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson made an important statement in this regard in the House of Commons: 'In view of the great interest now being shown in historical circles in the last days of British rule in India ... [there would be published] documents from the India Office records on the Transfer of Power and the events leading up to it.'¹ The announcement included the assurance that 'the editors will be independent historians who will be given unrestrained access to the records, and freedom to select and edit the documents for publication'. The outcome of the project thus framed at the highest level in England was the series known as *The Transfer of Power*, edited by Nicholas Mansergh, Smuts Professor of the History of the British Commonwealth at Cambridge. In addition to the announcement made in Parliament, Mansergh, as the 'Editor-in-Chief', stated that the 'purpose of the series' was 'to make available to scholars in convenient printed form the more important British historical records relating to the transfer of power in India'.²

Arguably, there is an obvious inadequacy in the notion that all that happened in 1947 was a 'transfer of power'. In Indian perception the attainment of independence was a significant moment in the history of the struggle against British rule in the subcontinent. The representation of the emergence of independent India and Pakistan as transfer of power, solely an alteration of constitutional relations, tended towards the occlusion of that history. The focus on the legalistic

¹ *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th Series, House of Commons, Vol. 749, 30 June 1967, cols 147–8.

² Nicholas Mansergh, ed., 'Foreword', *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. VI, London, 1976, p. viii.

notion of power transfer, and the discourse of modalities of transfer, marginalized the more significant part of the historical processes at work. Likewise, the self-imposed limitations of the British documentation enterprise left many issues unaddressed: the project was to select documents from British state papers relating to the constitutional arrangements from the Cripps Mission of 1942 to 15 August 1947. In that discourse, in the official archives and the Viceroy's papers, the Indian voice was recorded only in terms of a few important spokesmen of political parties who were present during negotiations with the British Indian government. The Indian institutions, personalities, and events were included in the documentation only to the extent that the official papers took cognizance of them.

That is not to say that the task of documentation in the twelve volumes produced between 1970 and 1983 by the HMSO (Her Majesty's Stationery Office) was not competently handled by Professor Mansergh and his editorial assistants. These volumes were products of the best of British scholarship. But the initial conception of the project was delimited to certain issues and historical sources. I recall that in 1971 when I invited Sir Penderel Moon, a brilliant officer of the Indian Civil Service and later a member of Mansergh's editorial team, to a seminar at St Antony's College, Oxford, a number of us questioned him about this and he pointed out that perhaps we had not paid attention to the subtitle of the Mansergh volumes, 'Constitutional Relations between Britain and India'. Clearly the agenda for any Indian endeavour towards the documentation of the years leading to independence in 1947 would be different. How it would be different was suggested by Professor Sarvepalli Gopal in a luminous editorial preface to the first volume produced under the present project. He said that the projected volumes aimed to 'present, within limits set by the sources, documents relating to the activities, attitudes and ideas of the diverse classes and sections of Indian society, all of which contributed to the attainment of Indian independence with partition'.³

It is significant that the title chosen for this series was 'Towards Freedom'. While the subtitle emphasizes the focus upon the 'movement for independence', the title evokes discourses in other domains as well—the struggle for social justice, for economic empowerment against exploitation, and for cultural autonomy. These were also prominent discourses within the overarching framework of the Indian people's struggle for freedom. One is reminded of the words of Mahatma Gandhi in an essay he wrote in the *Harijan* a few days before his death, on 27 January 1948: 'The Congress has won political freedom but it has yet to win economic freedom, social and moral freedom.'⁴ This awareness of different categories of freedom allows space for a conception of the freedom struggle far wider in amplitude than the textbook approach to the struggle for independence from British rule. It makes a struggle for freedoms of many kinds thinkable. And it broadens the idea of a history of freedom struggle. This is how I understand the choice of the title for this series: *Towards Freedom*.

To sum it up, the present series of volumes focuses upon not just the legal processes of the transfer of power and the overtly political activities which brought that about, but also the struggle for freedom in different domains—economic, social, and cultural. The agenda of

³ S. Gopal, 'General Editor's Preface', in Partha Sarathi Gupta, ed., *Towards Freedom 1943–44*, Delhi, 1997, p. vii.

⁴ M.K. Gandhi, 'Congress Position', *Harijan*, 1 February 1948, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 90, p. 497. Also see 'His Last Will and Testament', *Harijan*, 15 February 1948, where he spoke of economic, social, and moral dimensions of independence, beyond the political independence which had been attained, *ibid.*, p. 526. This document was written c. 29 January 1948, shortly before Gandhi's death, and it was also referred to in the AICC papers as 'Draft Constitution of the Congress'.

the series, therefore, is open to the entry of themes relating to the struggle of the peasantry, the working classes, and different sections of people as well as to a broad spectrum of political organizations who in their own light worked towards attainment of freedom.

To anyone interested in the craft of history, a pertinent question will be how the documentation will reflect this agenda. The selection of appropriate documents is not an easy task. We are here looking at long-term historical processes such as the slowly evolving ideas about nationhood or class solidarity; the dynamics of popular participation in political movements; the links being forged between movements of the peasantry, the industrial labour, and the freedom struggle; the youth and student movements vis-à-vis the political parties; the changing social hierarchy in caste terms in relation to electoral and agitational politics; the gender relationships evolving from the traditional patriarchal structure towards developments that had liberating potentials; the anti-feudal and anti-British movement in the princely states; and the interface between all these trends in the ideational and cultural domains. The instantiation of these long-term processes through events as reflected in documents is the task at hand. The documents reflect fragments of the events which constitute links in the chain of certain historical processes of long duration.

It was decided years ago, at an early stage of this project, to distribute the work among editors on a purely chronological basis, that is, each of the volumes in the series would relate to a particular year assigned to an editor. This opened the project to the possibility that the long-term processes would be lost sight of in the depiction of the particularities of the year each editor was taking care of. I incurred unpopularity in the ICHR when I suggested many years ago that a thematic division of labour between the various editors, rather than a chronological one assigning one year to each, would have been a better organizing principle.⁵ I will not elaborate that point again. Whatever the drawbacks or merits of the chronological frame for assigning editorial responsibility might have been, it has been in operation for twenty years and hopefully it will enable us to complete the task before us. For the volume editors the limitation of chronological framework has probably been an irksome constraint. On the whole, the volume editors, each a distinguished historian, bore with fortitude the limits set on their temporal range, and they situate the particular historical conjuncture of a given year in the broader perspective of the long-term processes as they see them in the introduction to the volume. The Editor's Introduction is thus a bridge between the narrative of events and the narrative of the freedom struggle as he or she sees it. It also provides a space for the presentation of his or her approach to the themes and issues the volume addresses and the explication of that approach.

As regards the sources from which the documents are collected for the volumes in this series, Professor Sarvepalli Gopal, in his General Editor's Preface, remarked in 1997: 'Although some of the volumes contain documents drawn from regional language sources, a fully comprehensive selection from these sources merit a separate project.'⁶ This was an accurate prediction of the future output, that is, the volumes which are coming out now. In deciding on what non-English and regional language sources will be collected, the volume editors have exercised their judgement in deploying the research assistance they were provided. Judging by volumes produced till now and the manuscripts now being received from editors and being

⁵ S. Bhattacharya, 'The Empire on Borrowed Time: Towards Freedom 1943-44', *The Book Review*, Vol. XXII (January-February 1998): pp. 24-5.

⁶ Gopal, 'General Editor's Preface', in P.S. Gupta ed., *Towards Freedom 1943-44*, p. vii.

processed in the editorial office at the ICHR, the editors possibly felt that on most of the themes addressed there exists sufficient source material in English and in translation. A more systematic search for and selection of non-English sources would have made this collection more complete, but it was evidently not found to be feasible. We are committed to completing the project undertaken in 1988–89 as soon as possible, in keeping with the schedule that had been planned. This would help limit the editors' scope for new source searches.

One more point needs to be made about the sources. Probably, in the last decade of the Raj, especially during the World War, perspicacious observers began to sense a debilitation of the imperial powers and the impending decolonization process on a global scale, and the consequent shift in the power relationships—this altered their perception of the politics of independence struggle radically. This was happening globally in old empires, among the people and leaders in the imperial metropolises as well as their colonial peripheries. On the latter process we do have some documentation in the present series, but not much on the shift in the imperial metropolis. This is because *ab initio* the project was meant to be mainly for the collection of sources in India. This was probably because it was clear from the beginning that we have our hands full if we look at the Indian archival sources alone. The mass and density of archival sources generated by the Government in India will be evident to even a layman who glances at the following pages. Moreover, as I mentioned earlier, unlike similar enterprises in England, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka to collect sources throwing light on the last days of the British Raj, this series includes a great many activities and events which are not overtly political or constitutional.

A few words on the editorial apparatus in these volumes may be in order. The chapters are thematically organized while the sequence of placement of documents in each chapter is strictly chronological. There are two guides for the reader, first the Calendar of Documents indicating the subject of each document and the source, and second, the Index at the end of the volume. An effort has been made to make the volumes as 'reader-friendly' as possible. In some collections of this nature the editorial practice has been to provide a synoptic account of the contents of each document. This has not been the pattern in this series chiefly because it would increase the size of the volumes. As it is, each volume in the series is quite bulky and the editors who tried to trim the size down are to be applauded.

I would like to put on record the annoying delays this project was subjected to on account of political interference to the detriment of academic autonomy. One result of such interference was that the ICHR authorities appointed no successor to the General Editor, Professor Sarvepalli Gopal, when he passed away in April 2002; in fact, all work on the project was suspended for about five years. I was asked in 2006 to take up the task initiated by Professor Gopal, my senior colleague at Jawaharlal Nehru University. Upon accepting this position, an honorary one, my first task was to assemble an editorial team at the ICHR and to request the editors of the different volumes to resume the work.

The disruption in the production of the volumes in the series for several years was tantamount to political censorship of academic work. It is interesting to note here that the British developed a system which prevented political parties' interference in such matters. The British project for the documentation of the *Transfer of Power* was processed through a mechanism which ensured inter-party consensus in parliament.⁷ For this purpose a standing inter-party group of Privy

⁷ *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, House of Commons, Vol. 733, col. 1706.

Counsellors was appointed and it included a minister of the ruling party and representatives of the Conservative Party as well as the Liberal Party; thus, once the project was passed by that committee, the task was left to experts duly appointed and no political interference occurred. In the light of what happened in our country on account of governmental changes, one might say that there was much that was commendable in the mechanism devised in Britain.

It is hoped that the agenda outlined above makes it amply clear what have been and remain the principles of documentation in the *Towards Freedom* series. The editors of the volumes have had the freedom to exercise their choice within certain parameters and they focus upon the themes which emerge from the selected documents. An editor of a volume in this series stated what most other editors would endorse: this is not 'an attempt to provide materials for an "official" or "definitive" statement on the history of the freedom movement'.⁸ I accepted the responsibility of being the General Editor of this series since I believe that although the Government of India has funded this enterprise, like many other research projects and institutions in this country, the output of the project is the work of autonomous minds of scholars guided by standards of the discipline of historiography. As I have said in the beginning, not only agenda statements like the one I have attempted now, but practice has defined principles as well, and that is how an academic community works.

* * *

In the days when India was hurtling forward to the tryst with destiny, in the first seven months of 1947, what were the trends in India's polity and civil society? That question is addressed by the enormous mass of evidence very competently marshalled by the editor of the present volume. In the present part (Part I, comprising Section One covering events of 1 January 1947 to 22 March 1947, and Section Two covering 23 March 1947 to 2 June 1947) there is thorough documentation of events up to the momentous Transfer of Power plan of the HMG (His Majesty's Government) of 3 June 1947. Compared to the previous volumes in this series, in this volume on 1947 the intensity of focus on events, both in the central arena of New Delhi as well as in various parts of the two emerging sovereign states, is much greater. We thought that a close-up picture and a concentrated study of this order was required because in those days the long-term trends in Indian polity and society reached a climactic point. Much that was below the surface in politics, and invisible even to the discerning eye, began to be seen as if the turbulence of those days brought them to the surface. It was a moment of revelation, not always of the uplifting kind. That is why this volume needs to be larger than other ones in this series though it covers a smaller span of time than any other volume.

I have said that in this small span of time we see in microcosm, so to speak, the long-term trends which go back far into history. What are these trends? First, the battle for the mind of the people of India between secessionism and the idea of an integrally united India. Second, there was a complex interplay between two processes: the process desired by the British 'Home' authorities and their Indian agents for a withdrawal with least damage to the interests they represented and imperial principles they upheld, and on the other hand the two major contestants in India, the Congress and the League, for the best possible outcome for themselves in the post-1947 scenario. That boils down to a trilateral dialogue. The third trend

⁸ Basudev Chatterjee, ed., *Towards Freedom 1938*, Delhi, 1999, p. lvii.

was the conflict between the politics of exclusion and its contestation through the endeavours to be inclusive—and this was a conflict which left its mark at every level, on the personal life of the victims of discrimination or violence, on politics at the level of communities, and ultimately on the founding principles of the newly emerging sovereign states. That conflict meant innumerable multilateral negotiations between majorities and minorities as they were perceived in terms of ethnicity, religion, language, caste status, and so on. All I need to do, given the very exhaustive documentation in the following pages, is to highlight what may be considered to be two frequently unasked questions: *How was Independence imagined? And how was Partition negotiated towards general acceptance?* If I fail to ask those questions I shall miss the wood for the tree. The documents in this collection covering the days from January 1 to June 2, 1947, throw a shaft of light on these questions.

'We are actors today in a great historical drama,' Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan said in one of the earliest meetings of Constituent Assembly. 'We are involved in it and therefore we are unable to perceive the large contours of it.'⁹ This was a perspicacious comment worthy of a philosopher. Few others could distance themselves from the immediate context and reflect upon the larger perspective. But that perspective was writ large in the initial move of the Constituent Assembly in January 1947, in the 'objectives resolution'. The words concerning the constitution to be made were bold and evocative of the long struggle that preceded the formation of the Constituent Assembly: '[A]ll power and authority of the sovereign Independent India, its constituent parts and organs of government, are derived from the people ... justice, social, economic and political, equality of status, of opportunity, and before the law; freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action, subject to law and public morality ... adequate safeguards ... for minorities, backward class.'¹⁰ Nehru in his speech on the resolution reminded the Constituent Assembly of the past pledges looking towards Independence: 'I felt the past crowding around me, and I also felt the future taking shape. We stood on the razor's edge of the present ... I felt that we were coming to the end of an age, I had a sense of our forebears watching this undertaking of ours ...'¹¹

While Independence was bathed in the light of a historical vision of this kind, occasionally it was also a moment that was perceived in terms of the mechanics of what was called in bureaucratic language the transfer of power and the continuity of administration. That discourse naturally demands a lot of space in the documents which are reproduced here. Rajendra Prasad, on the post-Independence status of that issue in a memorandum to Nehru on 18 February 1947, says:

The problem of administrative machinery and its strength must be viewed in the perspective that, from June 1948 onwards India ... will be free from the foreign element in all the branches of its services ... Stories of weakening of the administration, depletion of cadres, interference, corruption and inefficiency are a common tale in a large number of provinces in India today ... The problem of administrative strength, administrative efficiency, and administrative tradition is on a par with the problem of constitution-making...¹²

⁹ Sir S. Radhakrishnan's speech in the Constituent Assembly, 20 January 1947, Chapter 1, Document No. 2. (References below, unless specified otherwise, are to the present collection of documents, Part 1 of *Towards Freedom 1947*.)

¹⁰ 'Objectives Resolution', Chapter 1, Document No. 5.

¹¹ J. Nehru's speech in the Constituent Assembly, 22 January 1947, Chapter 1, Document No. 5.

¹² Rajendra Prasad's note to Nehru, 18 February 1947, Chapter 3, Document No. 20.

Prasad, President of the Constituent Assembly, added that apart from constitution-making what demanded attention was that, as many British civil servants had said for the past hundred years, 'the purposes of the state are translated to the common man and woman in the factory or the field by the actions, the activities, the vigour and the character of the district administrator who is the symbol of government's authority to them'.¹³

Thus independence meant taking care of the nuts and bolts of the administrative machinery, not just the general constitutional principles, and Prasad believes that this aspect has not 'received the consideration it deserves'. About this time the Viceroy writes to a British civil servant working in India that the Indian National Congress (INC) 'have shown signs lately of realizing the value of your services' (that is, of the Indian Civil Service [ICS]); the INC Working Committee, it was reported, approached some British ICS officers 'to stay after the transfer of power'.¹⁴ Another interesting aspect of the impending situation was the British Indian authorities' perception of the policies of the Indian government of India: for example, Viceroy Wavell writes to Pethick-Lawrence in January 1947: 'There is no doubt that the Congress High Command are becoming sobered by responsibility.' Wavell cites the 'recent action which has been taken against the communists' and says: 'Sooner or later the High Command [of the Congress] will have to face up to its own Left-Wing and other revolutionary influences, and each time it makes a tentative move to do so it is forced into a more realistic appreciation of what government of a great country really means.'¹⁵ Viceroy Wavell seems to have accepted the plausible view, expressed by Liaquat Ali Khan when the budget met with stiff Congress opposition, that Indian 'Big Business' was in close alliance with other Congress members, especially Vallabhbhai Patel.¹⁶ Around this time the British authorities in India happily note that 'the Congress government in Bombay had decided that the only way to deal with the Communists was to resort [to] the detention without trial ... it is a strange *volte face* from their old attitude to such executive measures ... [and] "imperialistic" methods'.¹⁷ We see in some of the documents in this collection a new stage in the process that began in 1939—the transition from the politics of aspiration to the politics of governance. This was also part of the meaning of independence now being read by the actors we see on the stage of history. Jawaharlal Nehru writes somewhat impatiently to a minor Congress leader who raised questions about the principles of the Congress: 'It is no good talking in terms of principles when decisions have to be made.'¹⁸

There was another facet of the idea of independence as well. B.R. Ambedkar asked in memorable words: 'What can *swaraj* mean to the untouchables?' Will it mean that 'under *swaraj* the Legislature and Executive will also be in the hands of the Hindus', that is, the dominant upper castes? If so, 'under *swaraj* the untouchables will have no way of escape from the destiny of degradation which Hindus and Hinduism have fixed for them'.¹⁹ Consider again the memorandum to the Minorities Sub-Committee from the All-India Adi-Hindu Depressed

¹³ Rajendra Prasad's note to Nehru, 18 February 1947, Chapter 3, Document No. 20.

¹⁴ Viceroy Wavell to Frederick Pethick-Lawrence, Chapter 2, Document No. 34.

¹⁵ Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 29 January 1947, Chapter 2, Document No. 34.

¹⁶ Wavell's journal, dated 18 March 1947, Chapter 4, Document No. 21.

¹⁷ Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, Chapter 2, Document No. 34.

¹⁸ Nehru to Ashrafuddin Ahmad Chowdhury, 23 May 1947, Chapter 15, Document No. 25.

¹⁹ B.R. Ambedkar's Memorandum on Rights of Minorities and Scheduled Castes, 24 March 1947, Chapter 13, Document No. 1.

Classes Association: they 'look forward to the emancipation of the depressed classes in the Constitution of a self-governing India'. It was argued that the system of representation in the legislatures till 1947 did not ensure 'any guarantee for the return [in elections] of the real representatives of the Scheduled Castes' and proposals were made for post-1947 constitutional provisions towards that end.²⁰ Thus the prospect of independence raised many expectations: political freedom, it was expected, would also bring in its wake freedom from caste oppression. Both the earlier pledges made by the Congress to the nation and the immediate circumstances (in particular the abstention of the Muslim League from participation in the Constituent Assembly) made the political leadership acutely conscious and diligent in the pursuit of protection of minorities. There were voices against this trend. 'The minority problem should not and must not overshadow the main issue, that of Independence of India.'²¹ When a Constituent Assembly member spoke thus, he was not alone. Nor was he talking in terms of generalities, because he went on to speak of 'under representation' of the majority Hindu population. 'It is very very unfortunate that the minority communities do not demand mere [*sic*] justice, equity and fair play' but also extraordinary safeguards and weightage. Apart from a few such dissenting voices there were, of course, differences in approach within the scheduled caste leadership. Sometimes these differences remained unstated; sometimes they were brought into the open. For instance, H.J. Khandekar says on Ambedkar: 'I hope, God grant him a little more good sense, he will give up the demand for separate electorates and also stop saying henceforth "I am not a Hindu" which he has been telling up till now.'²² There were also inevitably wrangling over numbers, to adequately represent the various categories of scheduled castes. As S. Nagappa said on that question, sometimes a community was 'over-represented' and some castes were so under-represented that the representatives were unable to 'fight for their community interests'.²³

However, on the whole the tendency of that discourse was not narrowly to focus on adversarial positions within but to take an inclusive stance to broaden the ambit of the constitutional protection to cover a great many communities as 'minorities'. Jagjivan Ram was farsighted in putting the scheduled castes' demands in a larger agenda addressing the minorities. The safeguards for the minorities he proposed covered not just the scheduled castes but also 'religious and racial minorities (for example, Christians and Aborigines)' as well as linguistic and cultural minorities. He was one of the earliest proponents of a Minorities Commission and suggested the institution of such bodies 'in the Centre and in every Province', that is, the Indian union as well as the states.²⁴ Perhaps the most vocal of the minorities was the Sikh community. For instance, leaders of the community argued that the province of Punjab not only 'was and must remain the homeland and the holy land of the Sikhs', but also that Sikhs were entitled to 'safeguards for the members of minorities' in India and the future constitution must contain 'safeguards for the protection of their religion, language, and culture as well as social and economic rights'.²⁵ Or again Baldev Singh's letter to Viceroy Mountbatten

²⁰ Memorandum to the Minorities Sub-Committee, Constituent Assembly, from the All-India Adi-Hindu Depressed Classes Association, 13 April 1947, Chapter 13, Document No. 10.

²¹ B.Das's speech in the Constituent Assembly, 24 January 1947, Chapter 1, Document No. 7.

²² H.J.Khandekar's speech in the Constituent Assembly, 21 January 1947, Chapter 1, Document No. 4.

²³ S.Nagappa's speech in the Constituent Assembly, 24 January 1947, Chapter 1, Document No. 7.

²⁴ Jagjivan Ram's note of 3 April 1947 on Safeguards for Minorities and Scheduled Castes, Chapter 13, Document No. 6.

²⁵ Memorandum on Sikhs by Ujjal Singh and Harnam Singh, March/April 1947, Mountbatten Papers, Chapter 13, Document No. 5.

on 2 June 1947: if division of Punjab is unavoidable, Sikhs must be 'given the same right in communal matters as has been accorded to the other two major communities'. Further, 'we have so far not been assured equal rights with others in either the existing or the proposed new Constituent Assembly. We request you to see that this is done'.²⁶ The Anglo-Indian community's response to the question of protection as a minority community in post-independence India provides an example and an explanation of the rapid proliferation of minority grievances and resultant lobbying in political circles. Frank Anthony, representing that community in the Constituent Assembly, says: 'I have always been reluctant, although a communal leader, to pursue communal hares and I am even more reluctant to enter into any communal dog fights ... But so long as you have a committee on minorities, so long as other minorities are insisting on their rights, alleged or real, then, certain minorities, particularly the smaller minorities have, in self-defence to ask for certain representation' of their own rights.²⁷ Immediately after that speech a scheduled caste leader from Madras expressed his disapproval of too much importance being given to the Anglo-Indians and Parsis who were by no stretch of imagination oppressed minorities.²⁸ Thus there was a good deal of conflict between the claimants to minority status and protection under the future Constitution of post-independence India. At the other end stood some North-Western Frontier Province (NWFP) tribes, meeting at the Mohmand Jirga in April 1947, who opted out of that game of the minority communities: 'We are independent and will remain so, we will never recognize anybody's suzerainty over us. We, Mohmands, and also other independent tribes record our deep annoyance against the British and the Hindus ...'²⁹ The prospect of independence touched the minds at all levels from the Constituent Assembly to tribal Jirgas in the remotest margin of India. Independence meant different things to different people at this historical conjuncture. That is what one learns when one is looking for the answer to the question, 'How was Independence imagined and understood?'

Independence came to the Indian people with a rider, the partition of India, that is to say the secession of some part of the people who were indivisible in nationalist imagination. That brings us to the discourse of partition. The dialectics of secessionism and integrationism is played out in the early part of the year 1947, in the efforts to preserve unity and to avoid partition. Who were involved in that last-ditch battle? Who stood for India's unity, or made what looked like mere gestures towards the idea of keeping the subcontinent and the Hindu and Muslim communities united? Preeminently it was Mahatma Gandhi. He was one man who was not merely making empty gestures when he proposed to Viceroy Mountbatten that M.A. Jinnah be invited to form government as Prime Minister, 'so long as all the measures that Mr Jinnah's cabinet brings forward are in the interests of the Indian people as a whole'.³⁰ Gandhiji's ideas on this issue can be traced in his statements dispersed in various sites, often showing his angst, his perception of the threat to the ideal of Indian's unity, and his effort to reconcile himself with the pragmatic position of the Congress which began to accept partition of India as a viable alternative.

²⁶ Baldev Singh to Mountbatten, 2 June 1947, Mountbatten Papers, Chapter 16, Document No. 39.

²⁷ F.R. Anthony's speech in the Constituent Assembly, 24 January 1947, Chapter 1, Document No. 7.

²⁸ S. Nagappa's speech in the Constituent Assembly, 24 January 1947, Chapter 1, Document No. 7.

²⁹ Report of the Intelligence Bureau, Home Dept, 11 April 1947, on the Mohmand Jirga at Ziarat Ghakai on 28 March 1947, Chapter 13, Document No. 8.

³⁰ H.L. Ismay to Gandhi, 6 April 1947, Draft Outline of Gandhi's Scheme, Chapter 14, Document No. 8.

It has often been said that 1947 saw the abandonment of the Gandhian position against the partition of India, a partition that went against the grain of the rejection of the 'two nations theory' by Gandhi and his followers in the Congress. That interpretation overlooks the nuances of the Gandhian position. In February 1947 Gandhi, in remote riot-affected Noakhali, is reported to have said: 'If the Hindus, who formed the majority in the whole of India, desired to keep everyone united by means of compulsion, he [Gandhi] would resist it ... He was as much against forced partition as against forced unity'; he was personally against partition, but he conceded that 'according to some ... the time had now come when such a division had become desirable in the interest of peace'.³¹ Again, he spoke of the same principle of freedom of choice in April 1947: 'Are the Muslims fighting for Pakistan? ... By force they cannot have an inch of land. By persuasion they may have the whole of India.'³² A few days later in riot-torn Bihar he said again: 'The Hindus of west Bengal have decided that Bengal should be divided ... why do the Hindus want separation?' And he added: it was for Shahid Suhrawardy to persuade the Hindus to be part of Pakistan.³³ In these and some other statements of Gandhi—particularly those made at prayer meetings, where he speaks as if he is talking to himself—presents a line of thinking which was quite consistent with his basic philosophy. He emphasizes freedom of choice and rejects coercion in any form as a means of preserving territorial unity. Given this position, there was no question of Gandhi's 'conversion' to a pro-partition position, because he always prioritized intrinsic freedom over territorial sovereignty.

While Mahatma Gandhi's digits of discourse were in this regard totally different from those of other political leaders, it is also clear that his heart did not accept partition. He continued to say in the months leading to partition how repugnant it was. Early in April 1947 he said: 'I am aware of the fact that there is a large section [of opinion in India] in favour of the vivisection of India. Who cares for the nation today? Everyone wants to realize his ambition and grab power by creating dissensions.'³⁴ 'India is on the threshold of independence. But this is not the independence I want. To my mind it may be no independence if India is partitioned and the minorities do not enjoy security, protection, and equal treatment.'³⁵ The hugely controversial proposal he made early in April 1947 to Viceroy Mountbatten to offer the Prime Minister's position to M.A. Jinnah, was arguably a desperate effort to preserve India's unity, although a different interpretation of that action was possible, as Mountbatten suggested half in jest when he said that he saw in it 'wily old Gandhi'.³⁶ What is amply clear is his isolation among the political leaders around him: 'I am sorry to say that I failed to carry any of them with me except Badshah Khan,' he wrote to Mountbatten on 11 April 1947, and hence his request 'to omit me from your consideration'.³⁷ And beyond the circle of the circumspect political leaders, he met with the stiffest open opposition: in the prayer meetings he held in Noakhali, Patna, or New Delhi, he repeatedly referred to thousands of letters he received condemning his

³¹ Gandhi's speech at prayer meeting, Haimchar, Noakhali District, 28 February 1947, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, hereafter cited as *CWMG (EB)*, Delhi, Publications Divisions, Government of India, 1999, vol.94, pp. 57–8.

³² Speech at prayer meeting, 9 April 1947, New Delhi, *ibid.*, p. 273.

³³ Speech at prayer meeting, 14 April 1947, Patna, *ibid.*, p. 309.

³⁴ Gandhi at interview with Sir M. Darling at Bhangi Colony, Gandhi's residence in Delhi at that time, 8 April 1947, *CWMG*, vol. 94, p. 261.

³⁵ Gandhi to Y.M. Dadoo and G.M. Naicker, 11 April 1947, *ibid.*, p. 286.

³⁶ Mountbatten's note on meeting with Gandhi, 1 April 1947, Chapter 14, Document No. 1.

³⁷ Gandhi to Mountbatten, 11 April 1947, Chapter 14, Document No. 11.

'betrayal' of Hindus and casting doubts on the sincerity and efficacy of his effort to befriend the Muslims. At this juncture we hear a sad cry from his heart at a prayer meeting: 'How can I carry conviction with the people by mere words if the sixty years of my public life have failed to convince them?'³⁸

As for the Congress leaders other than Gandhi, it was Abdul Ghaffar Khan who stood by him in trying to avoid partition, unless there was a popular mandate in its favour. Ghaffar Khan was no time-server, he was a political prisoner for twelve years in British India and later for fifteen years in post-independence Pakistan. In this first quarter of 1947 he struggled against the surge of communal fury in the Frontier; in the middle of March 1947 he and Gandhi addressed many meetings in Bihar. A week after the Working Committee accepted the partitioning of Punjab, Ghaffar Khan said: 'I find myself surrounded by darkness, which increases the more I think of the future of India ... If India is burned down, all will lose, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians.' And he went on to add: 'The Muslim League wants Partition. They can have it only through love and willing consent.'³⁹ In the middle of May, Ghaffar Khan returned to the Frontier, once again confronting the violent Muslim League opposition to him, and declared: 'Some people mislead you in the name of Islam ... What gains will Islam and the Muslims reap from these riots and the slaughter of children, women and the aged? And how are the Pakhtuns going to be benefited?'⁴⁰ From then on, Abdul Ghaffar Khan's aim was to put forward the idea of Pakhtun autonomy as a counter to the Muslims' tendency to identify themselves with Pakistan. This was the only strategy then available to him. In Part II of this volume that story will unfold. Finally, objectivity demands that we recognize that Jawaharlal Nehru and a few others probably did not abandon the idea of the fundamental unity of India in their heart, but their pragmatic mind dictated the acceptance of an inevitable partition. It appears that Gandhi and Ghaffar Khan were not consulted when Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Nehru, and the Working Committee of the Congress resolved to recommend the partition of Punjab on 8 March 1947. Nehru writes to Viceroy Wavell on 9 March 1947: 'The Muslim League openly want to make the whole of the Punjab a Pakistan area and wish to use a League minority to that end. As I have written to you separately, a proper and fair solution of this differently appears to be the division of the Punjab into predominantly Muslim area and a predominantly non-Muslim area. The Congress has recommended this...'⁴¹ It is interesting to note that Gandhi writes to Nehru on 20 March 1947 about that Congress resolution on Punjab partition saying, 'I know nothing about it', and reiterates his opposition to 'the two nations theory'.⁴² That fact that partition in principle was thus conceded by the Congress and Nehru, while Gandhi knew nothing about it, instantiates the disconnection between the two. At the same time, it is true that Nehru often reiterated his faith in India's unity which was the theme of the book he published the previous year, *The Discovery of India* (1946). And that is why perhaps, as will be evident from some documents here, Gandhi's faith in Nehru remained unshakable.

In the documents in this volume we find Jawaharlal Nehru in a pragmatic mood about the impending partition. 'The Congress has stood for the Union of India and still stands for it.

³⁸ Speech at prayer meeting, 28 April 1947, Patna, *ibid.*, p. 207.

³⁹ Ghaffar Khan's speech on 16 March 1947, Rajmohan Gandhi, *Ghaffar Khan: Non-violent Badshah of the Pakhtuns*, Penguin, New Delhi, 2004, p. 175.

⁴⁰ Abdul Ghaffar Khan's speech at Shabqadar, Rajmohan Gandhi, *ibid.*, p. 181.

⁴¹ Nehru to Wavell, 9 March 1947, Chapter 7, Document No. 50.

⁴² Gandhi to Nehru, 20 March, 1947, Chapter 9, Document No. 14.

But we have previously stated that we are not going to compel any part [of India] against its will. If that unfortunately leads to a division, then we accept it ... If we can have a united India straight away without such division, that will, of course be very welcome.⁴³ He points to the need to 'think realistically' and confides to Asaf Ali that he finds 'Mountbatten's approach is friendly and he wants to go ahead fast'. On the other hand, Nehru writes, the situation is 'tense and volcanic' in Punjab and Bengal, there is 'tremendous demand' from Hindu and Sikhs for partition of Bengal and Punjab, arms are being made or smuggled in to prepare for a civil war, many of the Muslim leaders are against partition of Bengal and Punjab.⁴⁴ The threat of communal conflict, almost tantamount to civil war, has been extensively documented in this volume along with the parallel narrative of communal politics. The police reports indicate a new trend; riots spread from towns to rural areas and there the savagery of both sides was unprecedented while police action was difficult.⁴⁵ There appears to be a perception in British official circles that on the partition question Nehru was amenable to be reluctantly persuaded to part ways with Gandhi. An interesting example of this belief at the highest level is Mountbatten's conversation with Winston Churchill. At this interview Churchill happened to be in bed and mulling over in his mind the Indian problem. Churchill, Mountbatten recalls, 'asked me if I foresaw any difficulties, particularly with Mr. Gandhi. I told him that I doubted whether he would create any difficulty which would not be dealt with by Patel and Nehru'.⁴⁶ Although Nehru was willing to accept the idea of partition, faced with the prospect of a civil war, he played a crucially important role in writing a devastating note against Mountbatten's 'Plan Balkan' which would have virtually divided India into a congeries of small political entities, putting to an end the Indian Union. That note of 11 May 1947, perhaps the single most important document in this collection, was an intervention that changed the course of events altogether.⁴⁷

As regards secessionism, the stance of the Muslim League remained in this period relentlessly consistent with its earlier politics. Right in the beginning of his viceroyalty Mountbatten held meetings with Jinnah, not less than six times between 5 April and 11 April 1947. 'He had brought all possible arguments to bear on Mr. Jinnah ... Mr Jinnah had not been able in his presence to adduce one single feasible argument in favour of Pakistan. In fact he had offered no counter-arguments. He gave the impression that he was not listening. He was impossible to argue with.'⁴⁸ The long conversations served only to confirm Mountbatten's first impression that Jinnah was 'in a most frigid, haughty and disdainful frame of mind'. All Jinnah had to say was that 'there was only one solution—a "surgical operation" on India'.⁴⁹ It seems probable that the Viceroy had formed a prejudice against Jinnah, because he was unreasonably expecting Jinnah to abandon the agenda which brought him to the forefront of Indian politics. Mountbatten's interview with Liaquat Ali Khan yielded an equally inflexible answer, through, unlike Jinnah, he 'smiled engagingly'. After having dealt with Congress members in the Interim Government, Liaquat Ali felt that 'the position now [is] so intolerable that if Your Excellency was only prepared

⁴³ Nehru to Ashafuddin Ahmad Chowdhury, 23 May 1947, Chapter 15, Document No. 25.

⁴⁴ Nehru to Asaf Ali, 14 May 1947, Chapter 16, Document No. 7.

⁴⁵ Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 17 March 1947, Chapter 8, Document No. 27.

⁴⁶ Record of interview between Mountbatten and Winston Churchill, 22 May 1947, in N. Mansergh, ed., *The Transfer of Power*, HMSO, London, Vol. X, p.945.

⁴⁷ Note by Nehru on the draft proposals, 11 May 1947, Chapter 16, Document No. 2.

⁴⁸ Mountbatten's statement at the 13th staff meeting, 11 April 1947, Chapter 15, Document No. 18.

⁴⁹ Record of interview between Mountbatten and Jinnah, 5-6 April 1947, Chapter 15, Document No. 14.

to let the Muslim League have the Sind Desert, I would still prefer to accept that and have a separate Muslim State ...⁵⁰ When Lady Edwina Mountbatten had an interview with Ms Fatima Jinnah, who was supposed to be very influential in the League in matters of state, 'she made frequent references to the fact that "the Muslims would fight for separation and their rights, if these were not agreed to"'.⁵¹ The upshot of these encounters was favourable to Jinnah and when Mountbatten began to talk to the leaders on the other side, it is obvious from the records that his object was to assess the degree of resistance to or compliance with a non-negotiable first premise: India shall be divided. The question was only as follows: Would the Congress, Mountbatten asked over and over again, 'accept voluntarily a decision which virtually abandoned the idea of India's unity if that were the only way that I could transfer power without a risk of civil war'?⁵² Rajendra Prasad's answer to that question was typical of the usual response of Congress leaders Mountbatten talked to: 'He did not see ... any alternative [to partition] but to transfer power in any manner which would not involve civil war.' After this first round of interviews Mountbatten seems to have made up his mind: he was keen to advertise to the world that 'it had always been and would remain his main desire to hand over power to an unified India', but 'when it became apparent that the retention of any form of an united India would start civil war ... he had regretfully been obliged to give up this ideal ...'⁵³ This decision was confided by him to his closest aides and advisers on 11 April 1947. In negotiating the process of partition the Muslim League, no doubt, suffered disappointments, in particular in the division of Punjab and Bengal and the failure in securing access to Calcutta. Mountbatten had his moment of revenge when he declared to Jinnah that a 'moth-eaten Pakistan ... was all that I could offer him'.⁵⁴ It will be perhaps incorrect to accept *in toto* Mountbatten's tendency to explain the historic decision of partition in terms of personalities; rather than give credit to or to blame the intransigence of Jinnah alone, we need to look at the mindset that had developed in the Muslim League and the long-term trends in inter-communal conflict and the politics of exclusion.

If this is how the Muslim League and the Congress negotiated and came to terms with the idea of partition, what of the other participants in the political arena? That takes us to the smaller players in politics and the provinces. There is a vast array of data in the documents in this volume on that discourse and the groundswell of communalism. It is neither necessary nor possible to plumb those depths, given the limits of the present 'Preface'. However, the role of the Hindu Mahasabha the traditional proponent of 'Akhand Hindusthan', merits attention; in Bengal the Mahasabha leader Syama Prasad Mookerjee took the lead in promoting the idea of partition of Bengal in the teeth of opposition of the proponents of 'United Bengal'. The latter included Sarat Chandra Bose, important in his own right and as the brother of Subhas Chandra Bose, and H.S. Suhrawardy, then the Premier of Bengal, as well as the leader of the Congress Legislature Party, Kiran Shankar Roy. That campaign lasted while many minor leaders in the Congress in Bengal dithered till just a fortnight before 15 August 1947; on the other hand the

⁵⁰ Record of interview between Mountbatten and Liaquat Ali Khan, 3 April 1947, Chapter 15, Document No. 11.

⁵¹ Record of interview between Lady Edwina Mountbatten and Ms Fatima Jinnah, 24 April 1947, Chapter 14, Document No. 26.

⁵² Interview between Mountbatten and Rajendra Prasad, 10 April 1947, Chapter 15, Document No. 15.

⁵³ Minutes of Viceroy's 13th staff meeting, 11 April 1947, Chapter 15, Document No. 18.

⁵⁴ Interview between Mountbatten and Jinnah, 10 April 1947, Chapter 15, Document No. 17.

Punjab partition was a settled question from the beginning of March 1947 when the Congress recommended that course of action.

Soon after that decision by the Congress, on 11 March 1947 B.S. Moonje, presumably speaking on behalf of Hindu Mahasabha, opposed the partition of Punjab and declared that it would be 'wise to stick out for *Akhand Hindusthan*, being prepared boldly to face bloodshed, rapine, loot, arson...' ⁵⁵ S.P. Mookerjee and the Hindu Mahasabha had been stout opponents of the notion of Pakistan and they did not accept the idea of freedom of accession. When the Cripps Mission was in India, Sir Stafford Cripps received a Hindu Mahasabha delegation which was led by V.D. Savarkar and included S.P. Mookerjee along with B.S. Moonje. In his personal note Cripps writes that their inflexible position was met with very firm declaration from Cripps that in his view the right of non-accession was fundamental. ⁵⁶ However, when in 1947 partition was evidently imminent, Mookerjee and the Mahasabha reversed their stand and demanded the right of non-accession to Pakistan for areas which had a Hindu majority, particularly areas located in the western part of Bengal. This reversal of position was announced in the middle of March 1947 at the Hindu Mahasabha conference chaired by S.P. Mookerjee; a similar stand was taken in March 1947 by a large delegation of Bengal politicians in the legislature who met Nehru and Patel to convince them that a separate state of West Bengal was a desideratum in the prevailing political context. ⁵⁷ Curiously, as late as April 1947, V.D. Savarkar maintained the rhetoric of *Akhand Bharat*: 'To frustrate the vivisection of our *Akhand Hindusthan* we must first vivisect their Pakistan.' ⁵⁸ Mookerjee, with the authority of his father, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, and the Hindu Bengali lobby behind him, said: 'The mere mention of the word partition need not throw us into a fainting fit ... If Bengal's constitution is left to be determined by a body of persons the majority of whom are dominated by the Muslim League policy ... we can expect no protection whatsoever from their hands. Our only salvation in such circumstances lies in demanding for ourselves a separate province ...' ⁵⁹ Within the Congress High Command Mookerjee had a sympathetic soul in Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Early in April 1947 Patel advised Mountbatten that it would be best for the Viceroy to announce straight away that Bengal would be partitioned. ⁶⁰ There is evidence that Patel was in active correspondence with S.P. Mookerjee and some other Bengal leaders. ⁶¹ However, Mookerjee's political clout in Bengal was reduced by the defeat of thirty of the thirty-one candidates the Hindu Mahasabha had put up in the general election of 1946—Mookerjee was the only successful candidate to retain his seat in the Bengal Legislative Assembly. His source of strength was not the party he led but the large number of pro-partitionists among the Legislative Assembly members; seventy-four of them, all non-Muslim members, signed a memorandum to the Viceroy requesting steps towards the partition

⁵⁵ B.S. Moonje, 11 March 1947, Chapter 9, Document No. 11.

⁵⁶ Sir Stafford Cripps, 'My Interview with the Hindu Mahasabha', March 1942, in N.Mansergh, ed., *Transfer of Power*, Vol. I, Document No. 415.

⁵⁷ *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, 12 March 1947 and 18 March 1947.

⁵⁸ Statement by V.D. Savarkar, 2 April 1947, Chapter 17, Document No. 3.

⁵⁹ Syama Prasad Mookerjee's statement, 19 March 1947, Chapter 9, Document No. 9.

⁶⁰ Record of interview between Mountbatten and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, 12 April 1947, in N.Mansergh, ed., *Transfer of Power*, Vol. X, p. 214.

⁶¹ Patel to Mookerjee, 17 May 1947; to K.C. Neogy, 13 May 1947; to B. Roy, 23 May 1947, etc., in Durga Das, ed., *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Ahmedabad, 1972, Vol. IV.

of Bengal and the leader of the Congress legislature party carried that to the Viceroy.⁶² A day before that memorandum was submitted S.P. Mookerjee wrote a skillfully drafted letter to the Viceroy recommending partition. He argued that if the demand for homeland for 24 per cent of India's Muslim population was legitimate, 45 per cent of Bengal's population being Hindu had an equally legitimate claim. Further, he built a case upon Jinnah's argument in justification of partition: 'Mr. Jinnah's claim for Pakistan is based on the theory that Hindu and Muslims are two separate nations ... [T]he same logic and argument applicable to Pakistan also apply to the partition of Bengal.'⁶³ And, he added, that the League was guided by 'fanatical notions of separate nationhood ... [But] we do not want to be cut off from the rest of India'.

From May 1947 onwards, S.P. Mookerjee was no longer leading a pro-partition agitation; he became one of many leaders swimming with the current moving inexorably towards partition. Mookerjee remained a defender of the Hindu community, as in the past. In his speeches in the Legislative Assembly of Bengal on the Noakhali riots he had highlighted desecration of 'symbols of Hindu religious worship' and mass conversion to Islam, which in his view, was 'more horrible than even physical death'.⁶⁴ Such a stance was not adopted by Congress legislators, but the general political climate and the news media encouraged the rhetoric of communal polarization. A handful of political leaders who were proponents of 'United Bengal', namely Sarat Chandra Bose, Kiran Sankar Roy, Abul Hashim, and a doubtful ally, Shahid Suhrawardy, were up against a climate of opinion that was adverse to their counsel of avoiding partition.⁶⁵ In a recently published series of letters in the private papers collection of Jinnah, we see Suhrawardy confiding to Liaquat Ali Khan of the Muslim League in May 1947: 'Even the Hindus of East Bengal, who do not count in the voting, are supporting the partition with death staring them on the face ... it is impossible to arouse Hindu opinion against it.'⁶⁶ Hindu Mahasabha had lost in Bengal every seat except one, that of S.P. Mookerjee, in the general election of 1946, but in 1947 the Mahasabha had the last laugh. After all, dividing people was a game that communalism, Hindu or Muslim, excelled in.

However, the storyline, as they say in the film world, is not just about partition, it was about independence, and anticipations of independence can be sensed in the documents in this volume. A little bit of the exhilaration of that moment is captured by Nehru when, reflecting on the Government's policy statement of 20 February 1947, he recalled in his letter to his mentor, Gandhi, 'our oft-repeated demand for quitting India. It may not be so exactly as we would have liked it. But the real thing is that they have finally decided and announced that they are quitting'.⁶⁷ The Congress declared: 'The end of an era is at hand and a new age will soon begin.'⁶⁸ 'We are here', Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan said in the Constituent Assembly,

⁶² Record of interview between Mountbatten and K.S.Roy, 3 May 1947, in N. Mansergh, ed., *Transfer of Power*, Vol. X, pp.556–8.

⁶³ Mookerjee to Mountbatten, 2 May 1947, in N. Mansergh, ed., *Transfer of Power*, Vol. X, p. 556–8.

⁶⁴ Mookerjee's speech on Noakhali and Chandpur riots, Proceedings of Bengal Legislative Assembly, vol. 72, no. 1, 1947, in S.P.Mookerjee, *Selected Speeches in Bengal Legislative Assembly 1937–1947*, Calcutta, 2002, pp 68–71.

⁶⁵ Cf. Partha Sarathi Gupta, 'Who Divided the Bengalees?'; A.G.Noorani, 'United Bengal Plan: Pipe Dream or Missed Opportunity'; Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, 'The Division of Hearts : Mahatma Gandhi and the Partition of Bengal, 1947', in Amrik Singh, ed., *The Partition in Retrospect*, New Delhi, 2000.

⁶⁶ H.S.Suhrawardy to Liaquat Ali Khan, 23 May 1947, Qaid-e-Azm papers, File no. 458, p. 80, in Harun-or-Rashid, ed., *Inside Bengal Politics, 1936–1947: Unpublished Correspondence of Partition Leaders*, Dhaka, 2003, pp. 86–7.

⁶⁷ Nehru to Gandhi, 24 February 1947, Chapter 5, Document No. 5.

⁶⁸ Congress Working Committee Resolution, Delhi, 6–8 March 1947, Chapter 5, Document No. 15.

‘working for the establishment of *Swaraj* for all the Indian people ... We are here to bring about real satisfaction of the fundamental needs of the common man of this country, irrespective of race, religion or community.’⁶⁹ While witnessing the momentous events documented in this volume, such were the intimations of the new age that India awaited.

* * *

A big project such as this incurs many debts. I would like to thank the editor of this volume, Sucheta Mahajan; the research assistants and the editorial team at the ICHR; Arjun Dev, who acted as the coordinator of the project; and Amit K. Gupta, who was co-editor of one volume and a consultant in respect of several volumes in this series. The Chairman of the ICHR, Basudev Chatterji, edited a volume in the *Towards Freedom* series some years ago and is now playing an important role in pushing forward our efforts to complete the series.

From the data generated by the publishers it seems that since 2006 when this project was effectively revived and I was asked to be the General Editor, the total output has been as follows: over eight thousand pages of text consisting of documents, and about six hundred pages of editorial research aids such as calendars of documents, biographical notes, and so on, have been produced in nine bulky tomes. These figures do not mean very much since these productions are best evaluated in terms of the extent to which research has been facilitated. That is to be seen in the future but for the present it is a matter of some satisfaction that documents hitherto dispersed in many archives and depositories have been made easily accessible and that a project that began three decades ago is nearing completion.

Needless to say, the Editorial Committee which has met from time to time was of great help. As the General Editor I would like to put on record my indebtedness to my distinguished fellow-editors in charge of different volumes, other than those mentioned above: Partha Sarathi Gupta, Bimal Prasad, Bipan Chandra, K.N. Panikkar, Sumit Sarkar, and Mushirul Hasan. I would also like to thank the Oxford University Press, New Delhi, for their cooperation.

SABYASACHI BHATTACHARYA
General Editor

⁶⁹ Radhakrishnan's speech in the Constituent Assembly, 20 January 1947, Chapter 1, Document No. 2.

Editor's Introduction

Nineteen forty-seven, the year covered by the present volume, was no ordinary year. Two momentous developments stood out, independence and partition. The movement for independence reached its conclusion and new nation states emerged. Important issues to do with nation-building which had been raised during the years of struggle now demanded they be addressed. What would be the nature of the polity? Would India be a secular state or a Hindu *rashtra*, following upon Pakistan's creation on a communal basis? What would be the place of minorities in the new state? How would the princely states integrate into the very different polity of erstwhile British India? How would the anti-colonial movement, which had operated as a broad front, transform into an ideologically distinct party?

One of the obvious questions associated with the year 1947 is why the British decided to quit. However, those looking for answers to why the British quit are unlikely to find them in the immediate context of 1947. They would be best off looking for these answers in the long term, in the years of protracted mass struggle against colonial rule. By 1947 what was left to decide were the modalities of to whom and how power was to be handed over.

By the end of World War II, the success of the national movement in the struggle for hegemony over the minds of the Indian people was evident. Nationalist fervour was at a high pitch and the anti-colonial movement had reached hitherto unpoliticized sections and areas. The pillars of the colonial state, the army and the bureaucracy, were weakened at their base. At the end of the war, the civil services stood depleted, weary from wartime service and handling nationalist agitations, most recently the 1942 movement. Imperialist hegemony had gradually but firmly been eroded and, equally important, was recognized by the colonial officials and the people to be so.¹

The nationalist strategy of struggle–truce–struggle²—phases of struggle alternating with phases of non-struggle—reduced colonial policy to a mess of contradictions. Repression and conciliation alternated as two poles of policy. When non-violent movements were met with repression, the power behind the government stood exposed. Conversely, the government was seen to be too weak when it went in for a truce. Loyalists deserted the sinking ship, as did Indian officials. For loyalists it was a crisis of faith; for the services, the dilemma was one of action. The same set of officials had to implement both poles of policy, repression and conciliation, and found this very confusing and demoralizing.

¹ This section draws upon the understanding elaborated in Sucheta Mahajan, *Independence & Partition: The Erosion of Colonial Power in India*, New Delhi, Sage, 2000.

² Bipan Chandra, *Indian National Movement: Long Term Dynamics*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing, 1988.

Looking ahead at the political prospects in India once the war ended, the Viceroy underlined the primacy of a successful settlement of the Indian question. This was believed to be essential for the future security of the Empire, to ensure British prestige in the East, and to keep India within the Commonwealth.³

When the national leaders came out of jail after long prison terms at the end of the War and toured the country, they assured their audiences that it was a matter of time before the British would go, maybe as early as two to five years. By early 1946 the British in turn made it clear that their days in India were numbered. The Secretary of State said as much in his speech on New Year's Day, 1946. Along with other Congress leaders, Gandhiji realized that the imperial rulers were sincere in the declaration of their intention to 'quit' in favour of independent rule by Indians and in turn tried to convince the people of this.⁴

However, the time for exploring avenues for settlement was running out. By mid-1946 a point had been reached where government had the responsibility to keep the peace but little power to do so. The Viceroy commented on the prospect of a revolt by the Congress, this time assisted by its own governments in power in the provinces: 'We could still probably suppress such a revolt ... [but] have nothing to put in its place and should be driven to an almost entirely official rule, for which the necessary numbers of efficient officials do not exist.'⁵

When given the option of staying on in India by changing the basis of rule to coercion, British Prime Minister Attlee argued against it on the following grounds: lack of administrative machinery to carry out a policy of rule by coercion; lack of troops owing to other international commitments; adverse opinion in the Labour Party; questionable loyalty of the Indian troops and the unwillingness of British troops to serve; adverse world opinion; and an uncomfortable position in UNO.⁶

As colonial rule could not survive on the old basis for long, a graceful withdrawal from India became the overarching aim of policy makers. Of course, the digits of the post imperial relationship had to be negotiated and modalities of transfer of power worked out. For the British government it was important that withdrawal be presented not as forced dissolution of imperial power but as a step forward in the planned devolution of power. A revised draft of a statement of policy dated 2 January 1947 set out His Majesty's Government's (HMG's) proposed statement as 'the final stage in their achievement of self government', which 'for the past thirty years...has been the policy of successive British governments.'⁷

A new Viceroy was accordingly appointed as part of a new policy initiative. So Mountbatten went out to India not only as the new Viceroy but also the last Viceroy, with the terminal date for British departure announced for 30 June 1948. Mountbatten even claimed in later years that he introduced the idea of the time limit and that if he had not done so the British may well still be out there! But many before Mountbatten had spoken of a time limit, including Wavell and Attlee, and members of the Cabinet had argued, from different points of view, for having a specific date for withdrawal and its announcement. For Mountbatten to claim sole

³ Wavell to War Cabinet India Committee, 26 March 1945, Nicholas Mansergh, ed., *Constitutional Relations between Great Britain and India, Transfer of Power* (hereafter *TOP*), 1942-47, Vol. V, H.M.S.O., 1974, p.733.

⁴ *Hindustan Times*, 24 February 1946.

⁵ 27 December 1945, Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, *TOP*, Vol. VI, 1976, p. 688.

⁶ Note c. 13 November 1946, *TOP*, Vol. IX, 1980, p. 68.

⁷ *TOP*, Vol. IX, pp. 441-3.

credit is clearly without substance. That he insisted on its public announcement is closer to what actually happened.

When the year opened, two developments had taken place. The first was that Nehru and Jinnah had been to London for talks to tease out the contradiction between their varied readings of the Cabinet Mission Plan. Congress saw the scheme as an alternative to partition and accepted the plan without accepting compulsory grouping of provinces. This was partly because Assam and North West Frontier Province (NWFP), both with Congress inclinations, were placed in the zones in the east and north west which would make up the future Pakistan. In contrast, the Muslim League was all for compulsory grouping of provinces and accepted the Mission scheme in as much as it implied Pakistan. It is not surprising that there was trouble given the opposed perceptions of the scheme by the two principal parties.

The second development was that the Congress had gone ahead and convened the constitution making body for its area, given the Muslim League's refusal to join the Constituent Assembly. But the impasse remained despite Congress accepting HMG's pro-League interpretation of the Mission scheme in the 6 December 1946 statement.⁸ The deadlock in the Interim Government also continued. With the options available exhausted, new initiatives were needed.

The Interim Government was an arena where civil war by other means was waged by the League. 'Non-cooperate from within' was Nehru's phrase for League's stance in the Interim Government.⁹ The intention of the League seems to have been to open battle on every front in pursuit of the end of Pakistan. Appointments made by Congress ministers were questioned and policy decisions hotly debated. Congress members in the Interim Government found the functioning of the government to be severely compromised. Patel demanded that Leaguers should resign from the government given their intemperate speech.¹⁰

This went on till 5 February 1947 when Congress members demanded resignation of League members.¹¹ Though disruptionist tactics of the League members was the main ground for this demand, it was also pointed out that the Muslim League had refused to join the Constituent Assembly which had convened on 9 December 1946. This implied an ambiguous acceptance of the Mission Plan on its part. This in turn meant framing of the constitution was obstructed. The League only accepted the short-term aspects of the Plan, namely the formation of an Interim Government, which it used to reach its goal of Pakistan. When the Muslim League Working Committee met at Karachi on 31 January 1947, it asked for the dissolution of the Plan.¹² This, despite the fact that the 6 December 1946 statement by the government had accepted the interpretation of the League on the vexed issue of grouping and asked Congress to assure that there would be a set procedure for the Constituent Assembly.

A few days before independence, Patel spoke about his experience in office in the Interim Government. As the Muslim League created deadlocks and were obstructionist, therefore Congress leaders decided that it was best to control some part of the country rather than have

⁸ Part I, Chapter 3, Document No. 24.

⁹ 13 October 1946, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, 2nd series (hereafter *SWJN*), Vol. 1, 1984, p. 21.

¹⁰ 26 January 1947, Part 1, Chapter 7, Document No. 1.

¹¹ Part 1, Chapter 3, Document No. 14.

¹² Part 1, Chapter 2, Document No. 35.

its writ run thinly over the whole country.¹³ Non-cooperation by the League in the Interim Government closed one more door and took the country closer to partition.

Apart from announcing a policy initiative, an additional factor behind HMG making the 20 February statement was the Congress demand that Muslim League join the Constituent Assembly or leave the Interim Government.¹⁴

His Majesty's Government hoped the impending February statement would gain time to answer the Congress demand that Muslim League leave the Constituent Assembly. Accordingly the government's answer to Nehru's demand was that he should await the policy statement soon to be announced. The constitutional crisis on the cards was staved off by the 20 February 1947 statement.¹⁵ Nehru appealed to Liaquat Ali Khan, the League leader, to meet and discuss differences as the British were fading out of the picture but got no response.¹⁶ The statement was double edged—on the one hand it was a response to the decline of authority of the colonial state and its instruments; on the other it was a notice to the League that agreement had to be worked out by the given time limit. The government wanted to convey the message that it was no longer willing to let the League hold the constitutional process to ransom.¹⁷

The statement was not clear about the government to which power was to be transferred. Was it the government emanating from the Constituent Assembly? Would India be united or divided? The League took the cue from the proviso in the statement that in the absence of agreement at the centre, power would be handed over to the authority at the helm in the provinces. The League duly made a bid for power in the Punjab, toppled the coalition government, and set that province on the path to civil war. Congress was convinced of the intention of the British to quit. Gandhiji said that the Congress provinces if wise will get what they want.¹⁸

* * *

Another aspect that changed in these months was the force of the strategic undertow to the evolution of political policy. Prior to 1947 all policy pronouncements or political settlements were conditional on ensuring military or strategic interests of Britain in the post-imperial scenario. A fixed date for withdrawal meant a change in the game, as it left no scope for awaiting protection of post-imperial strategic interests. The sequence now would be, as Ismay spelt out at a meeting of ministers of HMG, 'Military arrangements in India must follow the political situation.'¹⁹ Over time the realization dawned that a military treaty was unlikely and British interests were best safeguarded by promoting friendly relations, preferably within the Commonwealth.

Congress was in a dilemma about whether India should be in the Commonwealth or not because Congress had always stood for complete independence. In mid-April Nehru and his

¹³ 11 August 1947, Part 2, Chapter 2, Document No. 77.

¹⁴ Congress members of the Interim Government to Viceroy, 5 February 1947, Part 1, Chapter 3, Document No. 14.

¹⁵ Part 1, Chapter 5.

¹⁶ 9 March 1947, Part 1, Chapter 3, Document No. 23.

¹⁷ Part 1, Chapter 5, Document No. 1.

¹⁸ 24 February 1947, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (hereafter *CWMG*), Vol. 87, Publications Division, 1983, p. 12.

¹⁹ 18 March 1947, *TOP*, Vol. 9, p. 984.

colleagues had sought clarification on this issue from the government: Can one be a member of the Commonwealth while being an independent state?

On the British side, the question was: Could the grant of *immediate* dominion status get India to join the Commonwealth? This was the British hope, predicated on the Congress realization that it might be useful for British troops to stay on for a while till their own armed forces were in place, for which being in the Commonwealth would help. But Mountbatten dishonestly said at one point that the British were not interested in India being in the Commonwealth. This was a bargaining tactic.²⁰ In reality, India being in the Commonwealth would present Britain in a good light in the eyes of people across the world. Also Commonwealth as a transitional institutional arrangement would suit the British as much or more than the Congress.

His Majesty's Government's assessment of their strategic interests in the subcontinent after independence inclined them to cooperate with the Congress rather than prop up communal forces as they had done in the past. However, the British never pitched fully for united India; they modified their preference for united India on strategic grounds to having alliances with two dominions, both of whom would be partners in Commonwealth defence.²¹ While Pakistan would be an active partner, India would provide bases, as in the case of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

* * *

The move towards partition is documented in the chapter which details how the new Viceroy explores political alternatives for a couple of months after coming out to India. After discussions with Indian leaders, he realized the Mission Plan was a dead horse. In particular, he found Jinnah stubborn about getting Pakistan and impossible to argue with. The alternatives before Mountbatten appeared to be shrinking and he came around to the view that partition was on the cards.

The date for withdrawal was brought forward by Mountbatten to 15 August with announcement of Boundary Awards fixed for after 15 August. When the date of 15 August 1947 was announced, there were only 72 days to quit and divide. The early date for transfer of power was intended, first, to get Congress to agree to dominion status and, second, to enable the British government to escape responsibility for the worsening communal situation. The concern of the government was primarily how best to come out of the continuing crisis in the eyes of world public opinion. They did not care what happened to Indians.

Policy preferences before HMG were a gracious, smooth withdrawal and getting benefits from both dominions, India and Pakistan. It could be said that partition was not only the closing scene of Divide and Rule but also the first act of the drama of Commonwealth diplomacy.

The intention was to showcase HMG's intentions in the best possible way. Show of impartiality and fair play was vital, especially as world opinion was not convinced of the

²⁰ Mountbatten painted a very grim picture to V.K.K. Menon about Pakistan becoming stronger militarily if it stayed in the British Commonwealth and then argued that the only way India could prevent that was by being in the Commonwealth themselves (22 April 1947, Record of Interview between Mountbatten and V.K.K. Menon, Part 1, Chapter 15, Document No. 25). Also see Nye to Mountbatten, Part 1, Chapter 15, Document No. 35.

²¹ A Brief for Negotiations on India's Defence Requirements prepared by the Chiefs of Staff of Britain was enclosed in Secretary of State to PM, 24 July 1947, *TOP*, Vol. XII, 1983, pp. 314–21.

necessity of partition. So, since an agreed solution had not been reached, what was an award was dressed up as an agreed solution.

A point worth noting is that the 3 June Plan was an award, whatever its projection by the British as a plan agreed to by Congress and League.

The British professed that they tried their best to keep India united; in fact they took the easy way out of pleasing everyone, as Gandhiji pointed out to Mountbatten: 'I suggest that the attempt to please all parties is a fruitless and thankless task. In the course of our conversation I suggested that equal praise bestowed on both the parties was not meant. No praise would have been the right thing.'²²

The British did not really make a bid for unity; they only dressed up division as maximum possible unity. As the main proposition of the Congress, namely unity, was not accepted, the British were all for meeting all its minor demands (for example, its stance on Hyderabad or on Andaman and Nicobar Islands).²³

In mid-April 1947, at a conference of governors, it was decided that provinces can join only India or Pakistan—no option of independence was given to them. His Majesty's Government was not happy with closure of the option of independence, given its emphasis on presenting the mode of transfer of power as emanating from Indian and not British will. The Viceroy on his part was clear that partition must be limited to two successor states, and not lead to Balkanisation.²⁴

Mountbatten proposed that he be Governor-General of both India and Pakistan²⁵ to ensure a modicum of unity between the two dominions by virtue of his being a common link. He was confident that Jinnah would welcome Mountbatten's presence, but Jinnah decided to be Governor-General himself in order to show his independence from the British²⁶ and refused to relent because he did not wish to appear to be appeasing the British. A joint defence machinery was set up to act as a link between the dominions.²⁷ But the Kashmir conflict in October 1947 put paid to all prospects of joint defence. The joint defence machinery did not last beyond December 1947.

The documents on the stance of the political parties on the partition of India highlight an issue which continues to be contested—why Congress and Gandhiji accepted partition. Depending on the ideological bent of the writer, partition is either attributed to the British policy of divide and rule or the age-old rift between Hindus and Muslims. Some left wing writers have described independence as a deal between the metropolitan and Indian bourgeoisie for which the nation paid the price of partition. Or else that Congress leaders chose to have a strong Centre rather than share power with the League. Or that partition took place because of the Congress leaders' lust for quick and easy power, leaving the people betrayed and Gandhiji no longer wishing to live for 125 years.

There was one moot point which was most debated in the public domain and which Gandhiji, Nehru, and other leaders had to repeatedly explain and defend. Why was partition

²² 10/11 June 1947, Part 2, Chapter 33 (A), Document No. 13.

²³ Part 2, Chapter 28.

²⁴ Governors' Conference, 16 April 1947, *TOP*, Vol. X, 1981, pp. 269–79.

²⁵ Part 2, Chapter 30.

²⁶ 3 July 1947, Part 2, Chapter 30, Document No. 1.

²⁷ Record of Interview between Mountbatten and Gandhiji, Part 2, Chapter 27, Document No. 6.

accepted by Congress and Gandhiji after years of their resolute opposition to the two-nation theory and the politics of Jinnah and the Muslim League?

This partly explains the extensive documentation on the Congress relative to the Muslim League, whose stance on partition did not require explanation as it flowed from its earlier politics. Also the stance of the Muslim League is documented in different chapters on the division of Punjab and Bengal, on communalism in the provinces, and on exploring political alternatives. The complete picture can be pieced together by aggregating the documents dispersed across the chapters, which have not been organized according to parties, but on thematic lines, such as the League's stance, as well as of the Socialists and Communists.

The documents in the present selection indicate that Gandhiji's position was different from Congress' but not opposed to it. Gandhiji's nuanced position is evident in his proposal to the Viceroy that Jinnah be Prime Minister, embedded in the hope that this would satisfy his ambition and wean him away from his insistence on Pakistan.²⁸ Mountbatten noted that this pleased Jinnah's vanity.²⁹ However, the Congress leaders saw the proposal as fraught with too much risk. If the Congress opted out of the constitutional arena, that would leave it open to reactionary forces. Also, many followers would see it as betrayal by the party.³⁰ Further, the prospect of Pakistan could not be averted by appeasing Jinnah since even he could no longer call it off. Accordingly, Gandhiji withdrew his offer.³¹

When Gandhiji and Jinnah issued a direct appeal for peace in mid-April 1947,³² Patel pertinently pointed out to the Viceroy that Direct Action had to be withdrawn for the peace appeal to be effective.³³ Patel implied that the appeal for peace by Jinnah was not sincere, an assessment shared by Gandhiji.³⁴

By the summer of 1947 the realization had dawned on Congress leaders that conciliation of communalism was futile. Nehru described Jinnah as always wanting more even after accepting what he gets.³⁵ Elsewhere he said of Jinnah, 'We are up against something which is neither political, nor economic, nor reasonable, nor logical.'³⁶ Patel was clear that there would be no more appeasement of the Muslim League. He also pointed out that new India would not have communal weightages or communal electorates.³⁷

An alternative to partition was imposing unity by force. P.D. Tandon, Congress leader and Speaker of the United Provinces (UP) Assembly, was an active proponent of this view,³⁸ as was Ram Ratan Gupta, Congressman from Kanpur.³⁹ Both condemned the 'betrayal' by the Congress in accepting partition and argued for imposing unity. But Congress leaders chose to accept Pakistan rather than compel unity.

²⁸ Part 1, Chapter 15, Document No. 1.

²⁹ 9 April 1947, *TOP*, Vol. X, pp. 163-4.

³⁰ Nehru's meeting with the Viceroy, Part 1, Chapter 14, Document No. 10.

³¹ Part 1, Chapter 14, Document No. 10.

³² Part 1, Chapter 17, Document No. 9.

³³ Part 1, Chapter 17, Document No. 11.

³⁴ Prayer Meeting, 1 May 1947, *CWMG*, Vol. 87, p. 394.

³⁵ Nehru to Mervin, 25 May 1947, Part 1, Chapter 16, Document No. 28.

³⁶ Nehru to Hydari, 24 May 1947, Part 1, Chapter 19 (A), Document No. 24.

³⁷ Patel to N.V. Gadgil, 23 June 1947, *Sardar's Letters Mostly Unknown*, Vol. 2, 1977, p. 230.

³⁸ 4 June 1947, Typed note. P. D. Tandon Papers, Group 13, S. No. 361, National Archives of India (NAI).

³⁹ 19 July 1947, P.D. Tandon Papers, Part II, File No. 231, NAI.

Nehru was clear that use of the sword and the *lathi* could not stem the communal forces—rather, the ensuing civil war would have long term consequences. He stressed this in his speech at the All India Congress Committee (AICC) session on 15 June 1947.⁴⁰ A couple of months earlier, Congress President Kripalani had told the Viceroy, ‘Rather than have a battle we shall let them have their Pakistan.’⁴¹ It must be remembered that as Congress did not have state power, the option of unity by force meant fighting it out on the streets against volunteer armies of the communal forces.

Hence when partition seemed inevitable, Congress tried to find a way of accepting the undesirable, not as a communal demand, but as a principle based on self-determination.⁴² Gandhiji stated that the decision had been arrived at after taking into account the views of the people of all communities, be they Muslims, Sikhs or Hindus. Nehru explained partition as the outcome of the will of some sections to not be part of India.⁴³

At the Congress Working Committee meeting on 1 June 1947, Congress President Kripalani reminded the gathering that since 1942 it had been accepted that no part of India would be forced to stay on in India against its will.⁴⁴ At the session of the AICC on 15 June 1947, he again said that acceptance of partition flowed from the clause of no coercion in the Congress resolution on the Cripps Plan.⁴⁵

The fact that the settlement was final was seen as crucial by Congress leaders in accepting partition.⁴⁶ Though Patel pinned his hopes on the partition award on the ground that there was no further uncertainty,⁴⁷ he also expressed his dismay at Jinnah taking a communal standpoint in his broadcast over All India Radio (AIR) and the All India Muslim League’s response being contradictory and evasive and hence unlikely to be the basis for settlement.⁴⁸

The hope of India and Pakistan being reunited after some years reconciled leaders to the reality of division.⁴⁹ The expectation was that once passions subsided, common interests would draw people together and partition could be revoked. Hence Nehru appealed to people to not accept partition in their hearts.⁵⁰ This was expressed in his trademark eloquent prose: ‘We have often to go through the valley of the shadow before we reach the sunlit mountain tops.’⁵¹

However, if the hope of reuniting was to be kept alive, any measure that cemented partition was to be avoided, be it dividing the army, transfer of population, or parliamentary sanction

⁴⁰ Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 48.

⁴¹ 17 April 1947, Part 1, Chapter 15, Document No. 23.

⁴² Nehru to Viceroy, reporting on the Congress Working Committee meeting, 1 May 1947; Part 1, Chapter 15, Document No. 33.

⁴³ Speech on 9 August 1947, Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 87.

⁴⁴ Part 1, Chapter 16, Document No. 33.

⁴⁵ Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 50.

⁴⁶ Congress President to Viceroy, 2 June 1947, Part 1, Chapter 28, Document No. 37.

⁴⁷ Patel to B.M. Birla, 10 June 47, Part 2, Chapter 34, Document No. 3.

⁴⁸ Patel to Mountbatten, 10 June 1947, Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 33.

⁴⁹ Patel to Bozman, 11 July 1947, Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 78, and Patel’s speech at Liberty Week Celebrations, 11 August 1947, Part 2, Chapter 27, Document No. 11.

⁵⁰ Part 2, Chapter 25, Document No. 61.

⁵¹ Nehru to Cariappa, 29 April 1947, *SWJN*, 2nd series, Vol. 2, 1984, p. 377.

for transfer of power to two dominions. Congress leaders too joined Mountbatten to oppose transfer of population.⁵²

The AICC resolution on the 3 June Plan made it clear that partition was accepted as a temporary measure that would bring violence to an end. This was again repeated in Gandhiji's and Nehru's speeches at the AICC meeting on 14–15 June.⁵³ Ironically, for a believer in *ahimsa*, Gandhiji had a lesser dread of civil war than his colleagues. He wrote: 'Let British leave India to anarchy, rather than as a cock pit between two organized armies.'⁵⁴

The one positive aspect of partition for Congress was that they would get a free hand in the rest of the country. Nehru spoke of 80 or 90 per cent of India moving forward according to the map of India he had in mind and added: 'Those who stand as an obstacle in our way should go their way.'⁵⁵

Patel spelt out further what this freedom could be used for—to consolidate the armed forces and have a strong central government.⁵⁶ Jayaprakash Narayan, the socialist leader, also appreciated the 'emergence of a strong Union Centre' following upon the Partition Award and its concomitant division of provinces.⁵⁷

If the hope was unity at the centre, the apprehension was the opposite. Nehru was concerned that the Plan shown to him in early May 1947 held out the spectre of fragmentation. In other words, it would create many Ulsters in India as a large number of successor states would be allowed to emerge first and then given the option to unite.⁵⁸ Free choice to provinces and states was insisted upon by HMG. But the Viceroy had been in favour of only two dominions in mid-April and accordingly, the 3 June Plan limited fragmentation to partition into two dominions.

Congress then accepted partition on the grounds that it reflected the will of the people and that it was the only way out.⁵⁹ On 4 June, Gandhiji, after meeting the Viceroy and the Congress leaders, said at his daily prayer meeting that the Congress Working Committee had agreed to the vivisection of Hindustan not under any threat of violence or coercion but as there was no way of getting round the Muslim League.⁶⁰ There was hope that partition was only temporary and could be reversed once the imperialists were out of the picture and once Muslim League realized its folly. Partition was seen by the leaders as better than civil war or Balkanization. This helped leaders accept it. Only options left were waging an anti-communal struggle and using force, both of which could not be taken up. In the end, partition was accepted by Congress as a recognition of the failure of its strategy to draw in most of the Muslim masses into the national movement.

The letters and documents selected on this theme corroborate Gandhiji's reading of the communal situation that both Hindus and Muslims had moved far away from non-violence.

⁵² Nehru's interview with Mountbatten, 10 June, 1947, *SWJN*, 2nd series, Vol. 3, 1984, p. 212; 7 July 1947, Part 2, Chapter 31, Document No. 29.

⁵³ Part 2, Chapter 26, Document Nos 51, 52.

⁵⁴ *Harijan*, 20 July 1947, Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 82.

⁵⁵ Speech at Jallianwala Bagh meeting, 13 April 1947, Part 3, Chapter 10, Document No. 6.

⁵⁶ Patel to Neogy, 18 June 1947, Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 63.

⁵⁷ 25 June 1947, Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 68.

⁵⁸ Part 1, Chapter 16, Document No. 2.

⁵⁹ Nehru's speech at AICC, 9 August 1947, Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 87.

⁶⁰ 4 June 1947, Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 9.

He could not oppose Congress, he said, because Congress represented the people of India who have become communal.⁶¹

He was asked by some colleagues and sundry elements during his prayer meetings why he did not start a mass movement. According to them, such a movement could either be against the British, whose fall out would be Hindu-Muslim unity or it could be an anti-communal movement. They believed that both movements would bring about unity. In reality, however, the possibility of anti-communal struggle was limited as cadres and the ordinary people were communalized. Gandhiji was aware of his limitations: 'I have never created a situation in my life... People say that I had created a situation, but I had done nothing except giving a shape to what was already there. Today I see no sign of such a healthy feeling. And therefore I shall have to wait until the time comes.'⁶²

It has often been argued that Gandhiji was ignored in the parleys with the retreating imperial power. Gandhiji was believed to be helpless because of his disciples' alleged lust for power. However, the position of the Congress leaders can best be understood in political rather than personal terms. They wanted early transfer of power to take the country forward out of the impasse created by non-cooperation by the League.

As for Gandhiji's 'alienation' from the Congress, the record seems to suggest otherwise. Gandhiji dismissed any rumours of his disenchantment with Nehru by speaking very highly of him: 'He renounces things as easily as a snake its slough.'⁶³ He was consulted on political developments when in Noakhali. Kripalani and Nehru went to meet him there and asked him to come to Delhi. When he came to Delhi he met the Viceroy and participated in the Congress Working Committee meetings of 1 May, 25 May, 2 June, and in the AICC of 14 and 15 June.

Gandhiji put aside his principled objection to partition and enjoined on Congressmen to close ranks and fall behind Congress in accepting partition.⁶⁴ At the AICC session on 14 June Gandhiji explained:

Our constitution permits it and your duty demands it that if you feel that the Working Committee is in the wrong you should remove it, you should revolt and assume all power. You have a perfect right to do so, if you feel that you have the strength. But I do not find that strength in us today. If you had it I would also be with you and if I felt strong enough myself I would, alone, take up the flag of revolt. But today I do not see the conditions for doing so.⁶⁵

* * *

The acceptance of partition by the Congress and Gandhiji was the culmination of a long and arduous period during which all the major leaders of the Congress tried very hard to counter the League's concerted attempts to create communal violence and prevent agreement on the issue of united India. While the early months of the year saw Nehru and Patel dealing with the League's stalling tactics endorsed by the British government, Gandhiji toured the riot affected

⁶¹ 9 June 1947 prayer meeting, Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 30.

⁶² N.K. Bose, 'My Experiences as a Gandhian-II', in M.P. Sinha (ed.) *Contemporary Relevance of Gandhi*, Bombay, Nachiketa Publications Ltd., 1970, p. 53; Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 30.

⁶³ Gandhiji to Manu, 14 June 1947, Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 47.

⁶⁴ Gandhiji to Prabhavati Narayan, 30 June 1947, Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 73.

⁶⁵ Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 47.

areas of Noakhali and Bihar. He tried to provide a healing balm to the victims of both Hindu and Muslim communal violence. His efforts and methods were widely reported and debated.

Nehru appealed to Gandhiji when the latter was in Noakhali: 'But I have an overwhelming feeling that vital decisions are being made and will be made in Delhi affecting the whole of our future as well as of course the present, and your presence at such a moment is necessary.'⁶⁶ Gandhiji acceded to his request subsequently but explained his position: 'But I proceed the other way. I had learnt when still a child the formula, "As in the microcosm, so in the macrocosm."⁶⁷

While Gandhiji's efforts were heroic, their impact was limited, as even his disciples accepted.⁶⁸ Hindu refugees were slow to return to their villages or cast off fear. Muslims in turn continued to be hostile to him in Noakhali and elsewhere.⁶⁹ His critics commented on the futility of his method of non-violence and the politics of change of heart.⁷⁰ Even some of his own colleagues felt his kind of politics had not yet thrown up a strategy that could counter communal frenzy.⁷¹ Taking off from the Noakhali tragedy the Hindu Mahasabha time and again called upon Hindus to rise to their own self-defence.⁷²

Gandhiji's tour in Bihar and Noakhali not only reflected his efforts at combating communalism with weapons of non-violence and 'satyagraha' but also the feelings of fear and distrust that were mutual to both the communities. Complaints of Hindus in Noakhali and Muslims in Bihar were alike and the politics of communalism permeated every aspect of human life, including relief and rehabilitation work, as refugee camps turned into centres of further propaganda and hate speech. Amidst all of this, there were also a small crop of nationalists, both within Hindus and Muslims, who had stood the test of time, braving personal loss and treachery by their colleagues.⁷³

Ample documents cover Gandhiji and his struggle against Hindu communalism, especially in Bihar. The success of Muslim League's Direct Action in Calcutta and Noakhali further strengthened Hindu communal forces as some Hindus came to feel the need to organize on communal lines.⁷⁴ The Bihar riots were an example of this politics of reaction, which left 4300–700 killed, according to one estimate.⁷⁵

The Bihar riots are sometimes perceived as having marked the communalisation of Congress on Hindu lines. In reality, the ministry was secular and only some individual Congressmen were affected by communal sentiment and prejudice. Gandhiji insisted on an enquiry commission and on staying in Bihar, despite murmurs that his doing so would reflect poorly on the functioning of the Congress ministry and the image of individual Congressmen. His presence acted as a catalyst to the Congress ministry, despite differences with them on

⁶⁶ Part 1, Chapter 6, Document No. 6.

⁶⁷ Part 2, Chapter 34, Document No. 10.

⁶⁸ G.D. Birla to Pyarelal, 18 January 1947, *Bapu: A Unique Association*, Vol. 4, Bombay, 1977, p. 433.

⁶⁹ Part 1, Chapter 8 (A), Document No. 4.

⁷⁰ Part 2, Chapter 34, Document No. 5.

⁷¹ Part 2, Chapter 34, Document No. 7.

⁷² Part 1, Chapter 6, Document No. 7.

⁷³ Mridula Sarabhai's eyewitness account, Part 2, Chapter 35 (B), Document No. 3.

⁷⁴ Nehru to Viceroy, 17 April 1947, *SWJN*, 2nd series, Vol. 2, 1984, p. 94.

⁷⁵ Nehru to Suhrawardy, 1 January 1947, Part 1, Chapter 8 (B), Document No. 1.

many issues. The simple peasants of Bihar accepted him as their conscience, which helped them along the path of repentance.⁷⁶

If we look at the challenge posed by Hindu communal forces, we find that it took two forms, majority assertion and minority fears. The first could be repressed sternly. But insecurity of minorities demanded something more than assurances. Hindu communal elements pressurised the Congress to place the interests of Hindus first and function as a Hindu body. After the creation of Pakistan on the basis of the two-nation theory it was not surprising that the demand for a Hindu rashtra, a Hindu state, became more strident.

Even before the creation of Pakistan, Hindu communal organizations sensed an opportunity when in some places ordinary Hindus moved away from support to the Congress. This was largely because the policies of the Congress were perceived by some sections as anti-Hindu. One grievance was that Hindu rioters were selectively targeted for repression by the Congress ministries of UP and Bihar. Another grievance was that ministries continued pro-Muslim policies of the British government such as employment of greater proportion of Muslims in services.⁷⁷

The Hindu Mahasabha was heartened by the predicament the Congress found itself in—namely, facing the challenge of creation of Pakistan and the spread of communal sentiment within its own ranks. This opened up the threat of Hindu communal elements effecting an ideological shift in the Congress. The question posed to the Congress was why it continued to ‘sacrifice the Hindus for these handful of so-called nationalist Muslims’, who in any case were not loyal to the country?⁷⁸

The demand then was for Congress to accept it was a Hindu, not a national, body. Interestingly, this was the same as the position of the government, that the Congress should accept that it was a caste Hindu body. Congress leaders had refused to do so, recognizing this was an issue of legitimacy of its national character, not one of pragmatism as made out by those who argued for this.

Once Pakistan was announced, the Hindu Mahasabha called for ‘effective steps to build up a real and powerful Hindu state’.⁷⁹ In the months after independence this demand was raised with greater clamour but firmly opposed. Patel spoke eloquently of how ‘the state must exist for all irrespective of caste and creed’.⁸⁰ Congress leaders knew that a Hindu state would be the real prize for communal forces. This would amount to accepting the two-nation theory, which the Congress had not agreed to even while it saw the creation of Pakistan as unavoidable in the given circumstances. This demand by the Hindu communal forces for a Hindu state was later linked with their call to murder Gandhiji and Nehru who were seen as opposing it.

The relationship between Congress and Hindu communal elements was a complex one. At an individual level, there were failings but not so in the case of party, state governments, and at the level of the centre. The story was one of the Congress standing its ground and demonstrating resilience and optimism.

⁷⁶ Part 1, Chapter 9 (D), Document No. 39.

⁷⁷ Part 1, Chapter 8 (G), Document No. 7.

⁷⁸ Man Mohan to G.B. Pant, 23 June 1947, Part 2, Chapter 35 (G), Document No. 1.

⁷⁹ Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 27.

⁸⁰ Patel to B.M. Birla, 10 June 1947, Part 2, Chapter 34, Document No. 3.

The chapters on communalism in the provinces include documents detailing communal ideology as well as communal outbreaks in some selected provinces. Punjab and Bengal, being the 'scene of action', are the provinces which generally receive maximum academic attention. However, the documentation of communalization in provinces other than these two, like Central Provinces and Berar, Madras, and Sindh, shows that communalism was not restricted only to the two provinces partitioned in 1947. Communal ideology, more than rioting, had spread widely across regions and areas of public activity and concern.

For the Muslim League, this year saw a new kind of politics—the 'civil disobedience' movements in Punjab, NWFP, and Assam. Documents pertaining to these movements have been put together as part of the stories of these provinces which were seen as constituents of putative Pakistan and were hence conflict zones.

This agitation saw an organized Muslim League attack on non-communal ministries led by Congress and its allies. These ministries had been formed after the provincial elections of 1946. However, since these areas were seen as parts of future Pakistan, the Muslim League operated with an urgency to assert its political hold over them. This urgency was exacerbated after HMG's 20 February 1947 statement was issued. In this statement, the possibility of multiple successors to British authority was envisaged for the first time. It was stated that HMG would demit power by June 1948 to a central authority if all communities reached a compromise but should that not occur, it would consider transfer of power to provincial authorities.

With its leaders in jail and its anti-government stand, these movements were manifestations of the extent to which Muslim League was able to mobilize its supporters for mass action. As one activist put it, it was an exciting time for Muslim League followers as their leaders were going to jail for the first time. League's direct action in Punjab and NWFP came as a surprise to many, including Congress leaders, given Jinnah's pursuit of constitutional methods till mid-1946. Nehru believed the League leaders were far too reactionary, and being landlords, opposed to social change, to dare to indulge in any form of direct action. Sapru, the Liberal statesman, was of the view that Jinnah could not resort to direct action. Jayakar, in turn, quoted Patel that Congress could create more trouble than Jinnah's 100 mullahs.⁸¹

The ministries which the League movements sought to overthrow or besiege were those of the Unionists-Congress-Akalis in Punjab and Congress in Assam and NWFP. These 'movements' symbolized opposition to non-communal groupings and were, therefore, communal movements in terms of their immediate actions, interpretations, and undertones. The rhetoric and sharp opposition to coalition or Congress ministries was expressed in the pro-Muslim League press, for example, *Dawn*, and it fed into the communal atmosphere of the time.

In Punjab, the 'civil disobedience movement' tied in with the communal rioting which started on 4 March 1947, a day after the Coalition Ministry resigned from office. The large-scale rioting rapidly overtook rural and urban areas of the province. The demand for a Muslim League ministry remained unfulfilled since the Governor refused to form a communal ministry amidst widespread communal rioting. Section 93 regime or Governor's rule was imposed once the caretaker government resigned on 5 March. The attempts to form a ministry on the part of the Muslim League continued without success. After this, Punjab saw continual rioting till

⁸¹ 7 April 1946, Jayakar Papers, File No. 866, S. No. 35, NAI.

it was partitioned. The documents in this section detail the complex environment of political negotiations and widening communal tensions.

In the case of NWFP, to begin with, at stake was the religious status of a girl whose Sikh husband was killed in the Hazara disturbances and who later married a Muslim. When she wished to return to being a Sikh, the League gave the call of Islam in danger. The target of the agitation was the Congress Premier in whose residence she had sought refuge.⁸² Pir Sahib of Manki Sharif, the League leader, gave a clarion call to all Muslims to oppose the government.⁸³ Around March, the Khudai Khidmatgar movement picked up momentum, opposing the agitation of the League. Later they pursued the demand of 'Pathanistan' as an option in the referendum.⁸⁴ On the other hand, the League's agitation went on for two months followed by more arrests.⁸⁵ The Congress consistently complained against Governor Caroe who was clearly pro-League but to little avail.⁸⁶ The League 'movement' reached a feverish pitch just before the announcement of the referendum and vitiated the atmosphere completely.

In Assam,⁸⁷ the issue of migrants from East Bengal and their settlement had been a matter of dispute since the decade of the 1920s. With the Cabinet Mission scheme of Grouping and Muslim League's desire to have Assam in Pakistan as a contiguous area of Muslim majority, the provincial Muslim League increased its activity in Assam, riding on the issue of eviction of migrants. It criticized the drive to evict illegal immigrants, mostly Muslim, as communally motivated and blamed the government for the sad plight of immigrants. It had a good following in the districts of Dhubri, Nowgong, and Tezpur, where it could easily mobilize from the large Muslim settlements and also from the neighbouring districts of Bengal. Giving the call for a civil disobedience movement, the method of Leaguers and Muslim National Guards was to publicly intimidate authorities through large gatherings and mass mobilization and deter any official procedure of eviction or arrest of any leader. Patel tried his best to salvage the situation by responding to the frantic call of the Assam Premier for military aid. He also wrote to Wavell in order to place the matter on official record.

The documents relating to these Muslim League agitations have been placed together because of the nature of these struggles. The demonstrations, picketings, processions, public meetings, and mass arrests were weapons borrowed from the Congress armoury. The word 'civil disobedience' is a term of self-description used in Muslim League newspapers and by Muslim League leaders for this agitation, again taken from the Congress lexicon.

The direct action or civil disobedience movement in Punjab led to the downfall of the coalition ministry in the midst of and followed by violence. This was the context of the Congress Working Committee's 8 March resolution.⁸⁸ Nehru explained to the Viceroy that if Muslims could not be coerced, non-Muslims could not be coerced too.⁸⁹ In the wake of the Rawalpindi riots, by the end of March 1947, the Governor could see clearly that the Sikhs preferred partition of the province to Muslim domination. On 2 April, Central Legislative Assembly members told

⁸² Part 1, Chapter 7 (B), Document No. 1.

⁸³ Part 1, Chapter 7 (B), Document Nos 2, 3, 4.

⁸⁴ Part 1, Chapter 19 (B), Document No. 1.

⁸⁵ Part 1, Chapter 19 (B), Document No. 3.

⁸⁶ Part 1, Chapter 19 (B), Document Nos 7, 12.

⁸⁷ Part 1, Chapter 7 (C) and Chapter 19 (A).

⁸⁸ Part 1, Chapter 5, Document No. 19.

⁸⁹ Part 1, Chapter 5, Document No. 19.

Nehru that partition was the only solution.⁹⁰ On 27 April, Baldev Singh, Defence member in the Interim Government, stated that the only solution was an immediate division of Punjab.

In Bengal, the demand for partition of Bengal emerged from Hindus' distrust of the Chief Minister after the riots in Calcutta and Noakhali in August and October 1946 respectively.⁹¹ The Viceroy thought that the partition of provinces would reveal the limits of Pakistan and tried to convince Jinnah to this effect. Jinnah, on the other hand, saw the demand for partition of provinces as a bluff by Congress. In his meeting with the Viceroy on 8 April 1947, Jinnah tried to make a case against the partition of these provinces in the name of the inviolability of the cultural unity of Bengalis and Punjabis.⁹² Mountbatten's reply was that Jinnah's arguments about Bengali and Punjabi culture applied even more to the whole of India and were so convincing that he was all for revising his ideas about the partition of India. This really drove the old gentleman quite mad, in Mountbatten's words. In the words of the Viceroy, Jinnah demanded his Pakistan be made viable and threatened to demand the partition of Assam.⁹³

The situation—as Nehru understood it—was that if Punjab and Bengal do not come into the Constituent Assembly, while some parts of these provinces do, then it implied partition of Punjab and Bengal. This is how Nehru explained the decision of the Congress to demand the partition of the two provinces to Gandhiji.⁹⁴ The division of provinces was the only answer to Pakistan as demanded by Jinnah.⁹⁵ Later, Nehru quipped to Asaf Ali that obviously the two-nation theory was not meant to be applied in Punjab and Bengal.⁹⁶ Actually, Nehru had anticipated the likelihood of a partition of Bengal and Punjab as early as 1945: 'If Pakistan is given, then parts of Punjab and Bengal, where the Hindu population is in a majority, will join Hindustan and both the Punjab and Bengal will have to be divided.'⁹⁷

Opposed to the demand for partition was the campaign for United Bengal, begun by Suhrawardy, the League Chief Minister of Bengal, and supported by the Viceroy.⁹⁸ Nehru was against it, as he feared United Bengal would later ally with Pakistan. Patel said it was a trap to entice the naïve into the Muslim League parlour.⁹⁹ Sarat Bose, Congress leader from Bengal, was of the view that behind the demand for partition was Hindu Mahasabha support and the sentiments of Hindus against Suhrawardy's government since the Calcutta riots. Sarat Bose warned Patel that future generations would condemn Congress for supporting division.¹⁰⁰

Gandhiji was against partition on any account. He, therefore, saw a ray of hope in the United Bengal scheme, as it would question the two-nation theory. When faced with the apprehension of non-Muslims about Muslim domination, Gandhiji demanded that Suhrawardy convince the Hindus of his sincerity.¹⁰¹ However, this did not happen till August 1947, when

⁹⁰ Part 1, Chapter 20, Document No. 3.

⁹¹ Part 1, Chapter 21, Document No. 47.

⁹² Mountbatten's interview with Jinnah, 8 April, 1947, *TOP*, Vol. X, 1981, p. 159.

⁹³ Part 1, Chapter 15, Document No. 17.

⁹⁴ 24 February 1947, Part 1, Chapter 5, Document No. 5.

⁹⁵ Nehru to Gandhiji, 25 March 1947, *SWJN*, 2nd series, Vol. 2, pp. 77–8.

⁹⁶ 14 May 1947, Part 1, Chapter 16, Document No. 7.

⁹⁷ Speech at Lahore, 26 August 1945, *SWJN*, 2nd Series, Vol. 14, 1981, p. 165.

⁹⁸ Part 1, Chapter 9 (B), Document No. 10; Part 1, Chapter 21, Document Nos 5, 20, 45, 55.

⁹⁹ Part 1, Chapter 21, Document No. 53.

¹⁰⁰ Part 1, Chapter 21, Document No. 57.

¹⁰¹ Part 2, Chapter 32, Document No. 12.

Suhrawardy needed Gandhiji more than Gandhiji needed him (to ensure the protection of Calcutta Muslims).¹⁰²

But the possibility of a united Bengal began to recede when its limits became apparent. K.C. Neogy, Congress member of the Constituent Assembly from Bengal, warned Patel that large sums were being spent to purchase votes for unity.¹⁰³ P.B. Mukherji spoke of legislators being bribed.¹⁰⁴ For Gandhiji, impure means tainted the end of unity for him. He said at his prayer meeting that he could no longer support United Bengal as it had been brought to his notice that votes were being bought by its proponents.¹⁰⁵ Another weakness of the independent Bengal scheme was that it was a way of bringing in Pakistan through the backdoor. A letter calling upon 'Muslim Bengal' to sacrifice for the cause tellingly referred to United Bengal as Azad Pakistan.¹⁰⁶

By the end of May 1947, there was already division within the League in Bengal and the matter was referred to Jinnah who came out against Independent Bengal. On 9 June 1947 All India Muslim League Council accepted the 3rd June plan, which included partition of Bengal, though making it a point to say it was not in favour of the partition of the province but accepted it as part of the plan as a whole.¹⁰⁷

The Viceroy's stance was in the end crucial as he was the one who would include unity or partition of Bengal in the plan being formulated. While the plan sketched on 10 April 1947 included partition of Punjab and Bengal, by 1 May 1947 provinces were first allowed to opt for independence, then a week later for partition. However, when shown these draft proposals, Nehru expressed his apprehensions about likely Balkanization in the proposed schedule of successor states first separating and then coming together. The Viceroy then moved away from providing the option of independence, as he was of the view that if the British fell foul of Congress, it would be impossible to continue to run the country.¹⁰⁸

On 20 June 1947, Bengal legislators voted for partition of Bengal, 58 for, 21 against.

Support to demand for partition of provinces by Congress did not prove to be an answer to the demand of Pakistan, as was hoped. Worse, it opened the Congress to the charge of giving in to Hindu communal sentiments. Curzon must be chuckling in his grave, remarked the Bengal Governor to the Viceroy, referring to the Congress opposition to partition in 1905.¹⁰⁹ Having been proved powerless to change the state of affairs in Bengal, the Congress had no alternative to offer to those who argued that partition was the only solution in the context of a communal League government in Bengal. Gandhiji pointed out the dangers of forsaking the principle of unity, even if only tactically. For him, undivided India had to be upheld without any compromise.

Given the impending departure of the British, the politically sensitive areas were the territories contested by the Muslim League and Congress—namely, Bengal, Punjab, NWFP, and Assam. The situation was very complex and became messier as the momentum towards

¹⁰² Part 2, Chapter 35 (A), Document No. 12.

¹⁰³ 11 June 1947, Part 2, Chapter 32, Document No. 11.

¹⁰⁴ 9 June 1947, Part 2, Chapter 32, Document No. 8.

¹⁰⁵ Gandhiji to Sarat Bose, 8 June 1947, Part 2, Chapter 32, Document No. 5.

¹⁰⁶ Part 1, Chapter 21, Document No. 34.

¹⁰⁷ Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 29.

¹⁰⁸ Viceroy's ninth miscellaneous meeting, 1 May 1947, *TOP*, Vol. X, p. 511.

¹⁰⁹ 7 March 1947, cited in Mahajan, *Independence and Partition*, p. 276.

division gathered pace. Alternative political imaginings were at hand, be they in the form of United Bengal or Pathanistan.

For instance, in NWFP, the Governor claimed that if an election was held, the Congress would win but if a referendum was held, the Muslim League would win. This was because the election was about the issue of governance whereas being part of India or not was a question complicated by the existence of a political strand favouring independence. In the NWFP referendum, a demand for giving three choices—India, Pakistan, Pathanistan—was put forth. Pathanistan was sought to be used as a counter to Pakistan once it became clear that the province could not be part of India. Pathan autonomy and independence in a free Pathanistan as against assured Punjabi domination in Pakistan was the primary demand—an idea which continues to have currency. But the ruling out of the independence option in Bengal precluded its acceptance in NWFP.

Assam's reaction to the 3 June Plan was complex. There seems to have been general relief at the final rejection of the Cabinet Mission scheme since that would have entailed grouping with Bengal.¹¹⁰ In Sylhet, the League began to mobilize the Muslim National Guards on the ground that the referendum could not be held fairly under the provincial Congress ministry in Assam. The documents selected in this volume provide accounts of these processes of political mobilization as well as the politics around the referendum.¹¹¹ Accounts of protests, counter protests, rigging, and rioting indicate how the referendum was vitiated by communal politics and also ended up reinforcing it.

In Punjab, after the elections of 1946, some amount of negotiations between Akalis and Muslim League had been carried out with a possible coalition in mind. This had been unsuccessful and Akalis joined with Unionists and Congress to form a coalition ministry. The Governor of Punjab, even till late May 1947, was advocating a Muslim–Sikh compromise as the only logical solution to Punjab's problems. However, the Muslim League agitation against the Ministry alienated the Sikhs and undercut the chances of any settlement. The Sikh demand for a separate non-Muslim province in Punjab became more determined—though doubts beset Akali leaders about their position in a separate non-Muslim Punjab to be demarcated by a boundary commission. Hence, appeals were made to the Viceroy to keep Sikh interests in mind while etching the boundary line and faith was pinned on the sentence in the 3 June statement which declared that factors other than population would also guide the drawing of the boundary. The Sikhs hoped that property, religious places, revenue, and interests in canal colonies would be taken into account in their favour. All this added to the fluidity of the political situation.¹¹²

The chapter on Boundary Commissions¹¹³ covers the setting up of commissions to demarcate partitioned areas and their mode of operation. The Census of 1941 was taken as the base and population was the criterion for demarcation. The documents span the debate over the unit of territory that was to be taken for demarcation—the village or the *thana*—and the politics behind it. In the course of demarcation of territory, rivers and shrines were also taken into

¹¹⁰ Part 2, Chapter 26, Document No. 19.

¹¹¹ Part 2, Chapter 33 (B).

¹¹² Part 2, Chapter 29 (A).

¹¹³ Part 2, Chapter 29.

consideration along with population. The documents carry extensive memoranda from different communities and entities expressing their concerns to the commissions.

The entire operation was both botched and rushed, with the inept handling of the Chairman, Radcliffe, immortalized in the poem 'Partition' by W.H. Auden.¹¹⁴ Delaying announcement of the Boundary Commission awards to a period after the date of independence compounded the chaos and mayhem as many a village and town did not know which side of the border it was on. People found themselves on the wrong side of the border on 15 August 1947—flags of both India and Pakistan were flown in regions contested by both communities, Muslim and Hindu.

* * *

However, the above story of the colonial–national–communal conflict does not exhaust the diverse themes covered by the documents selected in the first two parts of these volumes. The documents also span the themes of the Constituent Assembly, India Independence Bill, minorities, refugees, volunteer bodies, and princely states.

Like independence and partition and other related institutions like the Commonwealth, Constituent Assembly is again not a routine annual occurrence but special to 1947. It came into being only in December 1946, since when it was a bone of contention between the Congress and the Muslim League, with the League dismissing it as unrepresentative and Congress demanding that the League join or else quit the Interim Government. Gandhiji's perspective was somewhat different from that of his colleagues. In his view, the Constituent Assembly should not function under British auspices; it should be convened when Congress has the strength to convene it for the whole country.¹¹⁵

A major issue with regard to the Constituent Assembly was one of representation, a need which was accentuated since it had sovereign powers and functioned as the Legislative Assembly upon transfer of power till new elections could be held and a new government set-up. Secondly, the major concern was the future shape of the Indian polity, to decide which the initial debates and discussions were held in the Assembly. The nature of Centre–state relations in future India was also a much-debated issue in the Assembly, reflecting concern with the autonomy of provinces and the extent of central powers.¹¹⁶ As a result, diverse groups and communities sought representation in this assembly. This anxiety related to representation is another facet which makes this year different. The imminence of freedom and sovereignty elicited demands for representation and claims to minority or other kinds of special status by many groups and communities. In this sense it can be said that the Constituent Assembly was, in this period at least, a political body and not merely a forum for drawing up of the constitution by experts.

A detailed selection from the debates on fundamental rights has been included in the volume since the issues continue to be of relevance today. For instance, the discussions regarding the right to practise religion as a fundamental right flow from an anxiety to reassure the minorities about the secular credentials of the state. The committees which discussed these

¹¹⁴ Dated May 1966, W.H. Auden, *Collected Poems*, Random House, 1976, p. 604.

¹¹⁵ 3 and 17 December 1946, *CWMG*, Vol. 86, 1982, pp. 184–5, 235.

¹¹⁶ Part 1, Chapter 1, Document No. 8.

issues displayed a fascinating diversity of opinion on the nature and terms of safeguards to be provided for minorities.

The debate on abolition of *zamindari* in the Constituent Assembly in the volume has been included for the diversity of political and ideological strands which it represents. Abolition was opposed by pointing out the developmental work undertaken by *zamindars*. At the other end of the spectrum were Nehru and other socialists who had been demanding abolition of *zamindari* and nationalization for many years as measures necessary to start the economic reconstruction of free India.

If K.M. Panikkar from Bikaner defended the *zamindari* system, Hasrat Mohani demanded that provinces of free India be made 'republics'¹¹⁷—the Constituent Assembly, in the period covered in this volume, appears to have been a political arena wherein the contemporary political issues and political ideologies found expression.

Constituent Assembly debates have been presented unedited to preserve the unity of the documents and to give the reader a sense of the complex process of constitution making. Splitting sessions under thematic heads has been avoided consciously so as to preserve the thread of the debates.

The structure of the committees and sub-committees appointed by the Constituent Assembly must be explained so that the context of the different memoranda may become clear. The Constituent Assembly of India appointed committees to look into matters holding vital importance for the future polity of India. As such, separate committees were appointed to look into the framing of the Constitution for the Union and the provinces, minority rights, fundamental rights, and so on. Committees which dealt with more than one subject, such as the Advisory Committees on Fundamental Rights, Minorities, and others, then appointed sub-committees to go into each individual subject. Thus, a sub-committee on minority rights was appointed to report on the nature of minority safeguards recommended for free India. Each of the committees as well as sub-committees held their meetings and debated these vital issues. In the period which this volume covers, only a few reports were tabled in the Constituent Assembly for discussion, like the Union Constitution Committee's interim report, the report of the sub-committee on minorities, and so on. All these reports were placed before the Constituent Assembly and were discussed clause by clause, wherein many amendments were suggested and dealt with. The selection of documents presented here is both from the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly as well as from the papers of its committees and sub-committees.¹¹⁸

The selected documents point out the concerns of different communities regarding their minority status. It is interesting to note that no one community was a minority—in fact Hindus and Muslims both had a minority status depending on their location. In Bihar the minority community implied Muslims whereas in Punjab, Hindus and Sikhs were the minority.

The chapters¹¹⁹ on minorities and displaced populations in the volume cover not just religious minorities; recognizing the fluid nature of the term 'minority', any group/community that formed the smaller section of the population in an area has been included—such a group may not have been a religious community in every instance.

¹¹⁷ Proceedings of July session, Part 2, Chapter 25, Document Nos 1, 10.

¹¹⁸ Constituent Assembly documents span Part 1, Chapters 1 and 13 and Part 2, Chapter 25.

¹¹⁹ Part 1, Chapters 11 and 23 and Part 2, Chapter 36.

Furthermore, (religious or other) groups such as Nagas, Jains, Depressed Classes, and Scheduled Castes claimed minority status on demographic grounds—a claim noteworthy because it sought to alter the basis of minority status—from religious to primarily demographic. Different communities and groups, such as Adivasis, Catholics, Gurkhas, claimed minority status keeping in mind different entitlements. This was behind the representations that such groups made before the Constituent Assembly for minority status.

These minority populations were very often also the ones being displaced on account of communal rioting. Refugee camps and other means of rehabilitation were also started in this period which have been documented in these volumes.

Apart from the chapters exclusively on minorities and displaced populations, chapters on communalism in provinces too have documents on this theme.¹²⁰

The documents selected for the chapters on volunteer bodies¹²¹ detail the growth and expansion of many such organizations affiliated to political parties in Bombay, Sindh, Orissa, Punjab, NWFP, and other provinces. The overall increase in their membership and activity is unmistakable. While, on the one hand, this growth signifies the deepening of communal tendencies, on the other, it also signifies a leaning towards violent methods for political ends. The increase in the membership of Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) and Muslim League National Guards (MLNG) in this period is linked to the increasing communalization of arenas close to the daily life of people. In Punjab, the involvement of RSS volunteers in refugee rehabilitation increased its popularity. The MLNG were at the forefront of the Muslim League-led 'civil disobedience' campaigns in Punjab, NWFP, and Assam. The growth of MLNG led to attempts at formation of Hindu Guards in UP. Similarly, Red Shirts, who operated on a nationalist, not communal platform, were involved in political activities in the NWFP. Most of these developments added to the prevailing communal tensions. The details of the membership and activity of these bodies have primarily come from fortnightly reports from the governments of the provinces.

Selected documents unravel the process of the making of the India Independence Act¹²² passed by British Parliament of the United Kingdom on 20 July 1947 and the outcome of a consultative process involving the major parties, the Congress and the League. Some of their suggestions were incorporated in the draft. The strategic and military interests of the British, as in the case of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, had to be balanced against the opposition of the Congress to their being British bases. The term 'independence' was objected to by Churchill on the ground that power was to be transferred on the basis of dominion status.

The princely states, comprising almost one-third of the area of the subcontinent, were vassal states and were administered through State Agencies and Residents in clusters. Comprising an entire section, the chapters on princely states (Part 2, Section 2) carry a diverse range of documents highlighting primarily how different states became part of the changes happening in provincial British India, whether it be popular peasant agitation, working class movements, communalism, or politics of partition. The documents highlight the movements for responsible government in the princely states, the representation of the princely states in the Constituent Assembly, and accession to the Unions.

¹²⁰ Part 2, Chapter 35.

¹²¹ Part 1, Chapters 10 and 24 and Part 2, Chapter 37.

¹²² Part 2, Chapter 28.

In the princely states, the movement for responsible government gathered momentum with the imminence of freedom. The peoples' movements pressed for democratization of their domains. It is in this context that the All India States Peoples Conference (AISPC) sought to consolidate the widespread streams of resistance in the states.

These movements met with stiff resistance from the princes. Some states' rulers were visionaries and guided their people towards responsible government. But most princes were reactionary and stood as a solid wall blocking the path of political progress. With the paramount power receding, one would have expected the princes to see the writing on the wall. But this was rarely the case. Some even saw the end of paramountcy as a return to pre-paramountcy, that is, to sovereignty, refusing to recognize the altered nature of the reality.¹²³

The issue of representation is another aspect of the political developments in the princely states. Different political groups, be it rulers or people, sought representation in the Constituent Assembly, the forum through which they could participate in the formulation of the future polity. The Chamber of Princes agreed to accept the Cabinet Mission Plan conditionally. However, even this Chamber of Princes did not have all the princes as its members. In fact, the big seven states had kept out, which together were entitled to 38 seats in the Constituent Assembly. The AISPC pointed out this basic flaw and questioned its *locus standi* as the representative body of princes. Its conditional acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan and dillydallying with joining the Constituent Assembly was criticized in the press. Representatives of different states began to raise their demand for greater representation, citing big population, importance of the state, and so on, as reasons. Then, there were also internal dissensions within the Chamber, as many *diwans* and high officials within the states were looking to the Congress with an eye on appointments abroad.

Representation in the Constituent Assembly culminated in the accession of the princely states to the Unions of India and Pakistan. However, this was not before many of the bigger states like Travancore and Hyderabad tried their best to negotiate their freedom outside both the proposed new dominions and maintain treaty relations on essential subjects with both Britain and the upcoming dominions. Eventually only accession to two unions took place as demanded by the Congress and its stand on the accession of Hyderabad and Travancore was accepted on the whole.

Broadly the chapters map the long and winding road that was taken to bring these states into the Union of India and Pakistan.

* * *

With impending freedom, communities of various kinds demanded recognition and representation. This was not only about fighting for loaves as often suggested. Many issues which were kept on the backburner—for instance, class—during the course of the freedom struggle now came to the fore with the end of colonialism. Hence, issues related to caste, labour, or agrarian relations acquired salience. This does not just involve positioning for better or more territory and resources. These issues had been there earlier too but were coming to the fore now, as was the question of zamindari. With British rule ending, the emergence of a new polity

¹²³ Part 2, Chapters 40, 41, 42, 43, and 44.

involved both fashioning of a new constitution and restructuring old institutions. This was part of the process of political churning which the old and new both had to go through.

The selection of documents in Part 3 also covers a range of issues related to the society and economy, ranging from division of assets and institutions to debates about the form and direction of society, politics, economy, the role of the state, governance, and so on.

The chapter on peasant movements¹²⁴ mostly covers the struggles of peasants and workers which were not against the departing imperialist power, but against feudal landowners and princely despots.

Some of the main movements were the Tebhaga, Telengana, and Warli revolts. The demand of the Tebhaga movement was, quite literally, for two-thirds of the produce, plus storing paddy in the *bargadar's* (sharecropper) storeroom. The Tebhaga struggle was special because of the participation of women and peasants from both Hindu and Muslim communities. Gandhiji lent support to the movement but warned against use of compulsion and violence. A massive struggle of the Warlis erupted in western India under the banner of the Kisan Sabha and the Communist Party. Warli tribals were caught in the landlord–moneylender–official nexus and suffered forced debt, slavery, and sexual exploitation. In the course of the movement, the Congress ministry was charged by the Communists with being soft on the zamindars, jungle contractors, and other intermediary elements and repressive against the peasants. The repression against the Telengana movement was most severe in Nalagonda in the state of Hyderabad. Martial law lasted for two months and untold miseries were unleashed by police authorities. The Punjab Kisan Morchas were the result of years of work by the Kisan Sabhas among the peasants in resistance to zamindars and communalism in western Punjab. A Kisan Sabha movement was organized in Karnataka in which activists were targeted and exterminated as 'goondas' by the reserve police and Section 144 was enforced across the state. This is also the period when the Hind Kisan Sabha was formed which aimed for an agrarian revolution.

This chapter carries a cache of documents highlighting lesser-known agrarian conflict between Mirasdars and Adi-Dravidas in Tanjore and *jagirdars'* onslaught on tenants in Patiala.

The chapter on working class movements¹²⁵ focuses largely on wages, working conditions, taxes, and legislation. It carries accounts of workers' strikes across the country as well as the different raids, arrests, and repressive measures against the Communist Party of India (CPI) and its allied organizations. The CPI presented the string of arrests of Communists as a sort of witch hunt against the party by the Congress. When the question was raised in the Constituent Assembly, Sardar Patel defended government action stating that the searches and arrests were in connection with a case of stolen defence documents and that appropriate procedure was being followed. In contrast to Communist–Congress clashes was a strike in Kanpur where Communist and Congressmen together led the agitation, which is covered by the documents in this selection.

Apart from this, the Communist Party published elaborate comments on other labour issues in the year such as the Industrial Disputes Bill. The All India Trade Union Congress celebrated the 25th year of its formation. In 1947, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel set up the Indian National Trade Union Congress.

¹²⁴ Part 3, Chapter 47.

¹²⁵ Part 3, Chapter 48.

The chapter includes documents which highlight trade union politics embedded in party rivalries. Further, it provides accounts of numerous workers' agitations and formation of unions in various industrial units, including in distant areas.

Nationalism, colonialism, and communalism continued to shape societal developments¹²⁶ in the post-independence era. Documents in the category of society in transition have been clubbed under the sections of caste, language, and politics; education and politics; linguistic provinces; religious and social practices; position of women; and cultural expressions.

One of the major movements was against ordering of public spaces along caste lines. A number of temples were opened up to 'Harijans' in South India as well as across the country. Most of these temple-entry movements were led by progressive associations from within the Scheduled Caste community. Then, there were others where Congressmen led such movements. The reaction from the upper caste community was mixed. In UP, in some places resolutions were forwarded to the AICC against the temple entry of Harijans. On the other hand, a prominent figure in Maharashtra went on a fast unto death in support of temple entry.

Documents on this theme indicate that the Congress organization and particularly Gandhiji were in correspondence with many of these organizations and movements. Most petitions, letters, and resolutions were copied to the Congress President or the AICC. The Harijan Sevak Sangh had already been active in this area, initiating self-educating and self-supporting institutions, such as community weaving centres. This met with applause as well as criticism from the organizations of Scheduled Castes. Several caste organizations began to work for material improvement in coordination with the government for scholarships, jobs, housing, and so on. There was emphasis on education informed by the Gandhian perspective, which advocated education related to everyday life and to the local economy.

Further, this year saw a major controversy over the national language and the position of Hindi, Urdu, and Hindustani in the new post-independent state. The arena was public spaces such as AIR, public signboards, schools, and so on. While Hindi and Urdu were now seen as languages 'belonging' to Hindus and Muslims respectively, Hindustani was preferred as the national language, including by Gandhiji, given the secular character of India and its mixed population. Provincial Congress Committees even adopted Hindustani as their language for correspondence and started preparations for its promotion. However, the conflict between promoters of Hindi and Urdu gradually led to Hindustani taking a backseat. The documents map this crucial debate.

While the debate over the national language assumed some communal overtones, education programmes and establishments too were affected by communalism and partition. The reputed Punjab University, including its famed library, based at Lahore, was partitioned between East and West Punjab. Further, there were battles between colonial, nationalist, and communal positions on this terrain around issues like imparting religious education in schools, use of the Roman script, the position of English language in education, the setting up of a new education system, strikes of primary school teachers in UP and Bengal (specifically in Noakhali), exposure of corruption in education departments, bringing back materials from the India Office in London to India, and the politics of language in literary forms. The last was the predicament of the publishers and editors of *Roshni* magazine who increasingly received articles in Sanskritised Hindi or Persianised Urdu while their policy was promotion of Hindustani.

¹²⁶ Part 3, Chapter 49.

Other social issues included removal of illiteracy, eradication of untouchability, abolition of beggary, promotion of inter-caste and inter-community marriages, and promotion of *ayurvedic* and *unani* medicine. The battle was on two fronts—to shed colonial elements and promote indigenous practices as well as adopt progressive measures to do away with social ills emanating from economic and social conditions. Hence, there were petitions from women organizations for prohibiting practices of bigamy, allowing divorce for Hindus, prohibiting the practice of *devdasis*, and enquiring into conditions of working women.

With the coming of freedom and the dissolution of the internal administrative boundaries of the colonial state, the demand for reorganization of states along linguistic lines came up. Linked to this was the demand from linguistic minorities for necessary safeguards.¹²⁷

Issues like cow slaughter and religious conversions were raised in the context of the safeguarding of religious and cultural practices. Some of these were consequences of the communalization of society at that time. Documents related to these issues are included.¹²⁸

This selection has a cache of advertisements for theatre and motion pictures and documents that highlight trends of artistic expression in those days, the role of progressive cultural organizations like Indian Peoples' Theatre Association, debates on arts and politics, and the representation of communities in cinema.

The chapter 'Economic Issues and Policies'¹²⁹ centres around debates on economic policies and problems of the times. A few months before freedom, all eyes were set on the economic future of India and Pakistan. Like everyone else, industrialists had no choice but to opt for either India or Pakistan. The partition endangered economic assets in both countries and this bred anxieties for those industrialists who were unsettled by it. A number of petitions, resolutions, and letters by these industrialists form a section of this chapter.

Another section is based on the private papers of Indian industrialists which reflect their concerns about nation-building. While Indian business classes predicted a prosperous future for India, Pakistan was perceived with pessimism. A question widely debated was whether Pakistan would be a sustainable self-sufficient economy. Papers relating to this debate are a part of this chapter.

Unlike industrialists, zamindars did not look to the future; they were gripped by their privileged present and its protection. Congress had a firm policy of land reforms at hand. Threatened zamindars wrote a number of letters, passed resolutions, and organized protests against the Congress policy, which are carried in this selection.

On 28 February 1947, Liaquat Ali Khan, then the Finance Minister in the Interim Government, presented the budget statement for 1947–48. The budget speech had mixed reactions. It was believed to have targeted the capitalists, who were seen as supporters of the Congress. Liaquat's speech alleviated the morale of the poor affected by the widespread black-marketing of necessities, inflation, and shortage of food supplies. Congress criticized the budget, while the Muslim League welcomed it. The press congratulated Liaquat for a pro-poor budget while the business community condemned him for being anti-business. Some of the sharply divided discussion on the subject is carried in these documents.

¹²⁷ Part 3, Chapter 49 (D).

¹²⁸ Part 3, Chapter 49 (E).

¹²⁹ Part 3, Chapter 50.

During the War, the British had ushered in a period of 'controls' and food rationing. In 1947, the question was whether 'controls' would continue. The year 1947 also brought freedom for the Indian 'rupee' from the bondage of British 'sterling'. A number of writings, mostly by economists, deal with the future of Indian currency. A few weeks before independence, Indian and British leadership were caught in difficult negotiations over settlement of the Sterling Balances due to India from Britain. A number of documents pertaining to these talks figure in this collection.

The documents selected in the chapter on Congress reorganisation¹³⁰ cover themes such as the future role of Congress; a new constitution for the Congress; factions and indiscipline; Socialists and Congress; and activities of the Congress, such as observance of Independence Day and membership drives.

The primary concern of the party was with its future role. Reorganization had taken a back seat given the involvement of the party in negotiations, in parliamentary work, in the Constituent Assembly and Interim Government, among other things. The Congress organization ended up playing second fiddle to the 'government' wing, to the distress of the Congress President.¹³¹ With independence, a change in the form of the party was on the cards to meet the new challenges. It was expected that the party, from being a platform for the anti-colonial movement, would come to represent a distinct ideology and interests. While some saw this as implying the winding up of the grand old party, others, like the General Secretary, Sadik Ali, initiated a debate on the continued relevance of the organization.¹³²

The chapter on the provincial ministries¹³³ highlights the complex position of the Congress as it held office while being a popular organization working for freedom. This dual role threw up a host of issues, ranging from cooperation and rivalry between different levels of the Congress organization to emerging corruption in administration. There are specific episodes which are covered in some detail.

The Congress Committee in Cochin raised the issue of the betterment of wages of workers with the Congress President, asking him to take it up with the Madras Congress ministry. Among the educated public, a lot of people began to approach the provincial ministries through the Congress President, making demands and highlighting areas of neglect, some with a tone of appeal and others with a note of criticism. The Congress Working Committee tried to address these complaints and memoranda received from various concerned members.

The case of the Madras Premier, T. Prakasam, against whom a no-confidence motion was moved is covered by the documents. So is the case from the Central Provinces and Berar where the Congress Premier publicly stated that given the creation of Pakistan, Muslims who remained behind in India would have no political rights or representation in services. His reference to Dr Hasan, one of his Cabinet members, in this context, generated controversy, into which Gandhiji was also drawn.

Documents in the section titled Foreign Relations¹³⁴ cover themes such as Asian Relations Conference, India's delegation to the United Nations, its position on the question of South Africa, Indonesia, Palestine, and Afghanistan, and independent diplomatic missions to the newly

¹³⁰ Part 3, Chapter 45.

¹³¹ 19 July 1947, Part 3, Chapter 45, Document No. 11.

¹³² 23 January 1947, Part 3, Chapter 45, Document No. 2.

¹³³ Part 3, Chapter 46.

¹³⁴ Part 3, Chapter 53.

emerging countries. Despite its colonial past and the traumatic events in the domestic sphere, the debut of India in international politics began with the image of India as an independent nation with a promising future. This selection outlines the trajectory of India's foreign policy as Indian leaders tried to maintain a precarious balance between cooperation and critical ideological distance from the power politics of those times.

The Inter Asian Relations Conference, which was the Congress' way to declare India's arrival as a new nation, was received both with criticism and applause. The Muslim League saw this conference as a ploy in what it perceived as a game by the Congress to wrest independence without addressing the Pakistan movement. Nehru, who was at the forefront of this event in Delhi, was seen to be using his best diplomatic abilities in order to demonstrate to the world that there was no fracture within India and that the idea of India was backed by reality. On the other hand, within Congress, this conference sought to widen the discourse of resistance to colonialism and imperialism to a pan-Asian platform. The pan-Asian platform did show some cracks, however, with India inviting Tibet separately, annoying China, which showed its displeasure.¹³⁵

Interesting developments occurred in the French and Portuguese colonies in the subcontinent. The French government became very anxious about the future of its territories in India as 15th August was approaching. In turn the people of the territory of Chandernagore, organized by the Socialist Party, demanded that the fate of the territory be left to its people. This view received sympathy from M. Roux, the French Charge D' Affaires, who was seen as a defeatist back home. Subbaiah, the leader of the Socialist Party, had distanced himself from the CPI and gone to Pondicherry to study the feasibility of a possible plebiscite. Subbaiah had ruled out the option of merging with the Indian Union because of repression of Communists by Congress governments. He was now in favour of having an independent state which would maintain its relations with France and Hindustan through treaties.

The chapter on foreign relations also carries documents related to the politics of the lesser-known episodes of decolonization such as in Goa—its Portuguese government, the Catholic Church and its influence on Goans, and their linguistic connections with neighbouring provinces—which were given due consideration by Nehru. The chapter carries his letters to the consul in Goa and his emphasis on Goans having the right to decide their future.

For the armed forces, civil services, and police officials,¹³⁶ this year began with a lot of anxiety over the uncertainty and delay in getting a political settlement in place. European officials placed in India mostly wanted to return home but could not ascertain what shape their post-retirement careers would take. Officials voiced their difficulties about adapting to the working style of the provincial ministries.

Once the issue of partition and two-nation theory came up, the composition of the services began to be examined in terms of community. It was found that Muslims were heavily represented in the police services. Further, the Muslim League had already clarified that they did not want a unified army, which then set off processes within the military establishment for dealing with this situation. This turned out to be a complicated matter as division on communal lines would mean a very inferior share for the Muslims, a point made to Jinnah by Auchinleck,

¹³⁵ Report by Nicholas Mansergh, May 1947 in *International Affairs*, Vol. 23, Document No. 3, July 1947, pp. 295–307, Part 3, Chapter 53 (A), Document No. 7.

¹³⁶ Part 3, Chapter 51.

Ismay, and the Viceroy as well. This aspect also brought the issue of representation of Muslims in the Indian armed forces to the fore.

In the course of enquiring into the communal violence in the provinces, mainly Bengal and Punjab, communal tendencies within the police services also came under the spotlight. The documents in this chapter cover the deliberations on these issues.

The chapter on the future of the Indian National Army (INA) personnel¹³⁷ focuses on the release of the INA détenus who had been put on trial at the end of the War. While there was some resistance from the Commander in Chief and the Viceroy, primarily on the grounds of their brutality towards fellow prisoners, there was a remarkable unanimity across the political spectrum in favour of their release, as evidenced in the resolution of the Constituent Assembly. In the course of this debate, the issue of the employment of INA men in responsible positions in administration such as Deputy Collectors came up. On the eve of independence, the government proposed to release INA men too as part of the general jail release programme to mark 15 August.

The impending birth of Pakistan on the basis of the League's two-nation theory raised several questions about the nature of its polity. Was Pakistan to be a modern, secular, democratic state, or was it going to eschew the 'western' form of political organization in favour of a theocratic one, in which Sharia or Islamic laws would become the basis of governance, law, and politics? Similar questions were also raised about the nature of the Indian nation state. While Hindu communal organizations did step up their demand for a Hindu rashtra in the wake of partition, the Congress dismissed all such notions as antediluvian, communal, and against Indian civilizational ethos. Documents relating to these issues have been included in the chapter 'Future Visions of the Two States'.¹³⁸

The chapter on the national flag¹³⁹ comprises primarily the proposals sent to the AICC and carried in newspapers regarding the composition of the flag. These ranged from a collage of different religious and civilization symbols of the subcontinent to being markedly distinct from national flags of other countries.¹⁴⁰ The focus was on a symbol that could stand for all the stories—the new nation, the uniqueness of India, freedom, sovereignty, and its civilizational legacy.

At the same time, there were proposals for the suitable remodification of the Congress flag and also the assertive demand of the Hindu Mahasabha that the only flag suitable for the country was the *bhagwa* (saffron) coloured flag bearing the lotus base and yellow swastika.¹⁴¹ There was a debate over the national flag when the symbol of *charkha* (spinning wheel) was replaced by *chakra* (wheel). Savarkar, the Hindu Mahasabha leader, explained that this chakra was the Dharma Chakra, and not Ashoka Chakra, reminiscent of the golden epoch of 'Hindu' history.¹⁴² The colour white was seen as the ultimate culmination of VIBGYOR and hence symbolic of purity and most suitable for the backdrop of the flag.¹⁴³

¹³⁷ Part 3, Chapter 51.

¹³⁸ Part 3, Chapter 54.

¹³⁹ Part 3, Chapter 55.

¹⁴⁰ 1 February 1947 and 25 June, 1947, Part 3, Chapter 55, Document Nos 1, 2.

¹⁴¹ 2 July 1947 and 16 July, 1947, Part 3, Chapter 55, Document Nos 3, 6.

¹⁴² 29 July 1947, Part 3, Chapter 55, Document No. 15.

¹⁴³ Rao Sahib Ikshvaku V.K. Viraraghava Acharya to Kripalani, 1 February 1947, Part 3, Chapter 55, Document No. 1.

The chapter on the flag includes the documents about the National Flag Committees of India and Pakistan and debates in the Constituent Assembly regarding their composition.¹⁴⁴ Jinnah, who had initially agreed to have the Union Jack on the Pakistan flag, later retracted, saying that it would not be accepted by the people of the country.¹⁴⁵ There was an emphasis on the new flag of Pakistan being appealing to the minorities as well.¹⁴⁶ Eventually, the National Flag of Pakistan was inaugurated in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly wherein Liaquat Ali Khan, the future Prime Minister, claimed that the flag stood for liberty and equality of all citizens in Pakistan.¹⁴⁷

There was discussion on whether people and organizations that were on the 'wrong side' of the border could salute the flag of their choice or not. The Congress left it to the people to decide but warned that the hoisting of the Pakistan flag by private institutions would be tolerated only in the initial state of transition.¹⁴⁸

Eventually, the national flag was introduced in the Constituent Assembly of the Indian Union by Nehru and applauded on an unprecedented scale. The tricolour and the chakra on the white background found resonance with the secular imagination of a country embedded in civilizational values as well as modern attributes of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The Hindu Mahasabha resolved to respect all flags but recommended that 'real' Hindus salute only the bhagwa flag and take a pledge to fight for the reunification of India.¹⁴⁹

As with most events of the year 1947, celebrating 15th August was also very politicized. This volume devotes a chapter to documents wherein different groups and leaders took a stand on the matter, ranging from Congress, Gandhiji, AISPC to Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in Punjab. The Hindu Mahasabha declared Independence Day as a day of mourning.¹⁵⁰ Newspapers carried special numbers, with messages from leaders. The midnight session of the Constituent Assembly was held on the night between 14 and 15 August wherein Nehru made his famous 'tryst with destiny' speech. The session began with the singing of *Vande Mataram* and the President's address. The session met again on the morning of 15 August and received messages of congratulations from countries across the globe. Gandhiji spent the day in Calcutta, fasting and spinning. Political prisoners were released and all major cities held their own public ceremonies to mark the day. Most celebrations on this day acknowledged the reality of partition and passed various resolutions to that effect.

Fifteen August 1947, then, was an occasion for both mourning and celebration. It marked independence and partition, which in turn reflected the success and failure of the anti-colonial movement. Success in wresting independence, failure in not being able to bring the majority of Muslims into the national movement.

The documents indicate that there was much discussion on the programmes for celebrating independence on 15 August 1947. The President of the Congress was of the view that the people of areas affected by partition and the ensuing violence could not be expected to rejoice on the day when their homes and villages would fall away from them. There were, however, others

¹⁴⁴ 19–20 July, 1947, 22 and 31 July, 1947 in Part 3, Chapter 55, Document Nos 10, 11, 16.

¹⁴⁵ 24 July, 1947 in Part 3, Chapter 55, Document No. 12.

¹⁴⁶ 10 August 1947, Part 3, Chapter 55, Document No. 19.

¹⁴⁷ 12 August 1947, Part 3, Chapter 55, Document No. 21.

¹⁴⁸ 19–20 July 1947, Part 3, Chapter 55, Document No. 10.

¹⁴⁹ 9 August 1947, Part 3, Chapter 55, Document No. 18.

¹⁵⁰ Part 3, Chapter 56, Document No. 24.

like Lallan Prasad 'Insaan' from Gorakhpur in the UP, who believed that not celebrating the day of hard-earned freedom amounted to a sin. An advocate from NWFP derided the ongoing preparations for celebrating 15 August in the face of widespread devastation and massacres. The various hues in which freedom was visualized become poignantly clear from the documents contained in this chapter. The coexisting experiences of triumph and anguish, the creation of new identities, and the questioning of old ties—the documents in this chapter evoke the multitude of reactions to the dawn of freedom.

A Note on the Organization of the Volume

The organization of the volume is somewhat unusual because the year that it deals with is unlike any other year of the freedom struggle. Nineteen forty-seven was the year of independence and partition. The conflict between communalism, nationalism, and imperialism, culminating in independence and partition, has been dealt with in Parts 1 and 2. In earlier volumes of *Towards Freedom*, the focus was on nationalist movements and communal politics and peasant and labour movements. Here, these issues pertaining to society, polity, economy, and culture at large, which would occur in any other routine year, have been dealt with in Part 3.

Part I is divided chronologically into two sections, with Section 1 ending on 22 March 1947, the date of arrival of the 'Last Viceroy'. Section 2 ends on 2 June 1947, after which the countdown to 15 August 1947 is announced by the Mountbatten Award of 3 June. Section 1 is organized thematically under the broad heads of political developments; communalism at the centre and in the provinces; and volunteer organizations, minorities, and refugees. This thematic pattern is repeated in Sections 2 and 3. In Part 2, Section 3 covers significant political developments in the period from 3 June 1947 to 15 August 1947. Following that, Section 4 is dedicated to princely states across the time period.

As regards the structure of the volume, *themes*, and not political parties, form the structural divisions. This allows one to demonstrate the diversity and complexity of perspectives on a particular issue. So the documents are organized under the head of labour, class, and movement, and within that the role and the position of Congress, Muslim League, and Communists.

The documents selected present the diversity of political opinions on various issues—at the January 1947 session of the AICC, Jayaprakash Narayan and other socialists disagreed with the Congress decision to accept HMG's 6 December 1946 interpretation of the 16 May 1946 statement of the Cabinet Mission. These reflected the wider differences of political opinion about British policies, nature of British imperialism, and its future intentions.

Another reason for arranging documents theme-wise rather than according to parties is the existence of multiple political parties and formations among Muslims, which a party-wise classification with an attendant focus on the Muslim League would have obscured. Even the Muslim League was not a one-leader party as it is sometimes presented. For example, in Punjab, provincial leadership was a point of contest between Sir Firoz Khan Noon and the Nawab of Mamdot. A letter from Jinnah to Noon about how a certain section of Punjab leaders supported Noon as provincial leader over Mamdot reflects how the party leadership at the national level was aware of internal party differences. Further, at the Bengal end, the divergence between Suhrawardy and Maulana Akram Khan over the former's sovereign Bengal move also points to the fluidity within the Muslim League. In Punjab, the Ahrars, Khaksars, and Jamiat represented interesting strands in the politics of Punjab—the leader of the Jamiat

even postulated a different political settlement for India. He advocated equal representation for Hindus and Muslims at the centre as a possible basis for all-India compromise. The Red Shirts movement in NWFP was another political organization with a different ideology. When the 3 June statement announced that a referendum would be held in NWFP to decide its future, the Red Shirts demanded Pathanistan as a third choice in the referendum. The turbulent nature of the politics in that area points to the continued conflicts over questions related to representation even today.

As far as the selection of documents goes, they emanate from both official and non-official sources. Official attitudes are reflected by documents selected from sources like the Home Department, its Political Department in particular, selections from Cabinet Papers and India Office Records in National Archives of India, and Mountbatten Papers. Very often these official documents, particularly the fortnightly reports from each province to the centre, are a valuable source of information on the nationalist, communal, and popular movements. Further, selected published official documents, such as from the Transfer of Power series, have been included where they are integrally linked to the story.

A note of caution is in order about taking what Mountbatten said and wrote at face value, without cross-checking with other sources. His megalomania is well known and informs much of his claims to having single-handedly influenced key political decisions such as the fixing of a time limit for British rule. His official correspondence is usually to be preferred over his periodical 'Personal Reports' and interviews, the reports being overly subjective and rather rambling and the records of interviews based on his memory (rather than kept by a secretary present in the room as is official practice), and to top it, tempered with an overweening sense of the self.

A wide variety of newspapers like *The Hindustan Times*, *Dawn*, *People's Age*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, among others, represent the non-official point of view. Private papers of institutions and individuals like AICC, AISPC, All India Hindu Mahasabha, Jayaprakash Narayan, S.P. Mookerjee, B.S. Moonje, and others also evince the intricacy of political processes in this period. Further, the numerous instances of individuals voicing their opinions about issues of socio-political and economic importance in their letters and memoranda to various political representatives, institutions, and bodies such as the AICC and the Constituent Assembly illustrate the extent of popular involvement in such matters.

Documents from published collections of primary sources such as *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, *Sardar Patel Correspondence*, *Mohammad Ali Jinnah Papers*, *Constituent Assembly Debates*, and others have also been selected to make the diversity of perspectives available in one place to the reader. For instance, extracts from Wavell's journal give a day-by-day account of the political developments in early 1947 and also point out the Viceroy's often incisive reactions and opinions. Documents have been included relating to the extremely significant issues discussed in the Constituent Assembly and its committees, for instance, fundamental rights and constitutional safeguards, which provide insights into the nature of free India.

Some documents translated from a few issues of newspapers in Hindi and Assamese have been included in a limited way as has some material from the state archives of Bengal, Madras, Delhi, Rajasthan, and Punjab.

Wherever possible, conscious preference has been given to newspaper reports over official ones to bring out diversity of opinion in the public domain. Newspapers often throw up delightful letters to the editor, maps of proposed boundary lines, cartoons with acerbic wit, and quaint

advertisements, such as one for a balm, titled 'freedom from pain', evidently inspired by the impending freedom of the country.

In some places only extracts have been taken from documents given the vast number of documents that the year 1947 has thrown up. This would be especially true of the voluminous series of documents like the papers of the major political parties and leaders, proceedings of the Constituent Assembly, and memoranda submitted to the Boundary Commission. Sometimes the documents are damaged or incomplete and can only be carried as an extract. The justification is that the principle behind this selection of documents has been not so much to provide *the* definitive compendium as a comprehensive guide; to indicate to the discerning reader that such a range of documents exists and point to where they may be accessed. Overall, the attempt has been to balance readability with retaining the originality of the documents as found.¹⁵¹

The outline for Part 1 which follows is organized around some select themes spread across chapters, such as the Constituent Assembly, the Interim Government, the making of the 3 June Plan, communalism, division of the provinces and volunteer organizations, minorities, and refugees.

Outline of Part I

Constituent Assembly: The Objectives Resolution and Demands for Representation

Chapters 1 and 13

During the initial months of 1947 the Constituent Assembly witnessed debates on the Objectives Resolution and representation of minorities in the Assembly. The Objectives Resolution moved by Pandit Nehru¹⁵² garnered widespread approval from all sections of the members in the house. The features of the resolution which were most discussed were those related to safeguarding the minorities and the right to free expression.

Vijaylakshmi Pandit hailed the resolution for addressing socio-economic inequity and cultural recognition and pointed out the deleterious effect of narrow and thoughtless strands of parochialism.¹⁵³ N.G. Ranga was pleased to note that the resolution gave ample space for people to register dissent within acceptable limits against any law in the country.¹⁵⁴ This feature was regarded as quite modern in its specificity because globally at this time, a large number of states were wary of public scrutiny of their governance and clamped down hard on protests.

Jawaharlal Nehru in an important speech made in the Assembly on 22 January underlined the need for a stable constitution as a 'basis for further work'. He also rebutted criticisms levelled against one of the features of the resolution which argued for popular sovereignty. Terming

¹⁵¹ The text of all documents has been retained as in the original, warts and all, except in the case of obvious typographical errors in original documents. To indicate other errors in the original documents, *sic* has been used. However, in the case of documents from published collections, both original errors and errors noted by the present editor are pointed out by using *sic*. Square brackets have also been used to add missing text.

Footnotes in original documents have been selectively included and marked with numerals. In these cases, notes/remarks by the editor have been marked with symbols.

¹⁵² All references in this outline are to Part 1; hence the Part is not mentioned in the footnotes hereafter. Chapter 1, Document No. 2.

¹⁵³ Chapter 1, Document No. 2.

¹⁵⁴ Chapter 1, Document No. 2.

reservations about such democratic provisions as 'medievalism', Nehru cautioned the audience against despotic tendencies, as these could 'shake the basis of the constitution'.¹⁵⁵

The other major plank on which political debate centred was the political representation of minorities across the country. The elections to the Constituent Assembly, as pointed out by Sardar Patel to J.V. Gohil, President of the Sindh Provincial Nationalist Harijan Party, in a letter dated 13 February, 'have been made in accordance with the document of May 16 and no alteration can be made'.¹⁵⁶ Subsequent demands made for representation were based not only on the numbers and status of the community but also on perceived fears of being marginalized by the larger community following the 'Grouping Scheme' of the Cabinet Mission that held sway. Communities such as the one residing in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, in a letter to Congress President, J.B Kripalani, expressed their deep resentment against the proposal for their merger with the 'communal' and 'deficit' province of Bengal. Their demand in fact was for a confederate state of their own, aligned with other tribes of the region and corresponded to what was being worked out by the Nagas at this juncture.¹⁵⁷

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, member of the Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee on minority issues,¹⁵⁸ in a memorandum dated 20 March, had a different standpoint from the committee's understanding on securing adequate safeguards for the minorities. Kaur made a strong case for the need to look at the uplift of women—the largest minority. Her exhortation to the minorities for a more proactive role in nation-building was based on her personal and principled stance against excessive dependence on safeguards and measures by the state, as it could in the long run prove divisive.¹⁵⁹

In a memorandum by R.N. Brahma on behalf of the tribes of Assam, one gets a deeper insight into those demands for representation which went beyond the merely political. The 'plains tribal' people of Assam petitioned for inclusion in the Assembly to protect their culture, holdings in land, cultivation, production, and preferential treatment while conducting commerce and trade.¹⁶⁰

A similar and more nuanced plea came from the Sikhs, who stressed on special economic and socio-cultural safeguards for their community based on their military, agricultural, and financial services to the country which far outweighed those of other major communities in Punjab.¹⁶¹

Frank Anthony in a memorandum forwarded in April 1947 stressed on the demand for reservations for Anglo-Indians in schools and the civil services as he considered it was 'essential for their schools to continue as a distinct entity within the educational system of the country'.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁵ Chapter 1, Document No. 5.

¹⁵⁶ Chapter 1, Document No. 10.

¹⁵⁷ Chapter 1, Document No. 11.

¹⁵⁸ Chapter 1, Document No. 12.

¹⁵⁹ Chapter 13, Document No. 14.

¹⁶⁰ Chapter 13, Document No. 4.

¹⁶¹ Chapter 13, Document No. 5.

¹⁶² Chapter 13, Document No. 19.

Other issues raised related to citizenship and language,¹⁶³ safeguards for minorities and Scheduled Castes,¹⁶⁴ Depressed Classes,¹⁶⁵ and provisions against untouchability¹⁶⁶ among others.

Early Political Developments: The Interim Government

Chapters 2, 3, and 14

The Viceroy, Lord Wavell, on 24 February 1947 set out to write his last 'periodical letter'¹⁶⁷ to King George VI, who was at the time touring South Africa. The Viceroy's letter was against the backdrop of the 6th December statement of the British government which raised political temperatures in the initial winter months of 1947 in Delhi. In India the recommendations of the Cabinet Mission Plan were interpreted by political parties in different and opposed ways. The Cabinet Mission proposed on 16 May 1946, and subsequently on 16 June 1946, two plans which sought to create a semblance of a unified India. Whereas the latter plan hinted at the partition of the subcontinent and was rejected out of hand by the Congress, it found great favour with the Muslim League. The 'Grouping Scheme' of the provinces, as the former plan came to be known colloquially, was the proposal around which political discussions revolved for many months.

The statement issued on 6 December 1946 attempted to resolve the conflict that had arisen over the Grouping Scheme by advancing the interpretation that the provinces had to necessarily group themselves into three sections for 'constitution making purposes' and could only opt out afterwards. The Congress demand that provinces be allowed to opt out to begin with, rankled the Muslim League which feared that the area that would comprise Pakistan would become too limited.

The statement was held out by the government as an inducement to the Muslim League, in order to get it to join the Constituent Assembly. Jawaharlal Nehru in a speech at the AICC meeting on 5 January 1947 brought forth a resolution recommending the acceptance of the 6th December statement¹⁶⁸ to a party which was deeply divided in its opinion. The Congress Socialists and the Hindu Mahasabha were against acceptance of the statement.¹⁶⁹ Sarat Chandra Bose from Bengal thought that accepting the statement would be an 'ignoble surrender of rights of Constituent Assembly and end of provincial autonomy'.¹⁷⁰ Congress eventually accepted the statement but urged the need to draft the constitution 'on as wide an agreement as possible' and without 'compulsion of any province or part of a province by another province'.¹⁷¹

By this time the Mission's consciously ambiguous perspective stood exposed. The Congress critique was based on the perspective of regions inhabited by interwoven communities, which

¹⁶³ Chapter 13, Document No. 22.

¹⁶⁴ Chapter 13, Document No. 6.

¹⁶⁵ Chapter 13, Document No. 10.

¹⁶⁶ Chapter 13, Document No. 18.

¹⁶⁷ Chapter 3, Document No. 22.

¹⁶⁸ Chapter 2, Document No. 4.

¹⁶⁹ Chapter 2, Document No. 1.

¹⁷⁰ Chapter 2, Document No. 6.

¹⁷¹ Chapter 2, Document No. 5.

made rigid territorial boundaries untenable. However, this position was not accepted by the British and was pilloried by the League.¹⁷²

The most significant voices of dissent to the Grouping Scheme came from Assam in the north-east and Punjab in the north-west. The chief objection of Bordoloi, the Congress leader, to Assam going into the Bengal-Assam section of the Constituent Assembly was that the Constitution 'would inevitably' be written by Bengal, and, owing to the latter's numerical majority, Assam would be unable to opt out from the aforesaid arrangements.¹⁷³ Such a scenario would affect a broad spectrum of communities in Assam ranging from caste Hindus to hill tribes, altering their patterns of political representation drastically. Md. Tayabullah of the Assam State Congress joined hands with fellow party men like Bardoloi in denouncing the Grouping Scheme as a way to 'weaken the Congress' and declared that no 'administrative machinery imposed by the British' would be applicable to Assam.¹⁷⁴

While accepting the terms of the 6th December statement, Jawaharlal Nehru distanced his party from any 'compulsion or imposition' upon the provinces as regards grouping. He highlighted the case of the Sikhs in Punjab, whom he feared, like his countrymen in Assam, would be short-changed in the constitution-making process. Drawing his vocabulary from the Cabinet Mission's accent on working out an amicable and democratic transfer of power, Nehru merely reminded the British government and the League of the implications of riding roughshod over the rights of communities while drawing up a constitution for provinces, especially if the majority community's concerns took precedence over those of the minorities.¹⁷⁵ Close on the heels of this remark was the resolution of the Pratinidhi Panthic Board passed on 11 January 1947 which exhorted the Congress to 'implement the assurances held out to the Sikhs by supporting the Sikh demand for communal veto regarding constitution making'.¹⁷⁶

This halfway house between summary acceptance and tacit objection to the statement appeared to the Muslim League as indecision or deliberate distortion on the part of the Congress.¹⁷⁷ Maulana Azad, the Congress leader, explaining his view to *The Hindustan Times* on 27 January 1947, reaffirmed Congress' commitment to Grouping in consonance with the aspirations of the communities and regions.¹⁷⁸

The Muslim League characterized the Congress' views on the statement as 'a jugglery of words' in a resolution passed at its meeting in Karachi on 31 January 1947. It withdrew its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan.¹⁷⁹

With the Muslim League aligned against the Cabinet Mission Plan, the Congress members of the Interim Government demanded the resignation of Muslim League members from it.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷² Chapter 3 (A), Document No. 30.

¹⁷³ Bardoloi's conversations with Clow were reported by the latter in a letter dated 6 January 1947 from A. Clow, Governor of Assam, to the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, Chapter 2, Document No. 9.

¹⁷⁴ Chapter 2, Document No. 21.

¹⁷⁵ Chapter 2, Document Nos 4, 5.

¹⁷⁶ Chapter 2, Document No. 18.

¹⁷⁷ Chapter 2, Document No. 30.

¹⁷⁸ Chapter 2, Document No. 32.

¹⁷⁹ Chapter 2, Document No. 35.

¹⁸⁰ Chapter 3, Document No. 14.

The League in turn, from what one gleans from official reports and media reportage of the time, vacillated between reaffirming its ties with the Interim Government or rescinding them.¹⁸¹

The impasse between the two parties was sought to be broken by Gandhiji—whom Jawaharlal Nehru requested to return to Delhi from East Bengal—with an unusual proposal. In his numerous private conversations with the new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, and more formally in a draft agreement with Lord Ismay, Gandhi set out his scheme of giving Jinnah the option of forming the government. If accepted by Jinnah, the Congress ‘would guarantee to co-operate freely and sincerely, so long as all the measures that Mr. Jinnah’s Cabinet bring forward are in the interests of the Indian people as a whole’.¹⁸² This plan over the course of a few weeks underwent a series of modifications and met with protest and support. Eventually, Gandhiji withdrew the plan, declaring to Lord Mountbatten in a letter of 11 April 1947 his inability to carry forward the plan within the Congress party.¹⁸³ Congress was apprehensive of such a proposal being interpreted by its political constituency as abdicating its responsibility and that too in favour of a person who had not abjured the politics of hatred.¹⁸⁴

Exploring Political Alternatives: The Making of the 3rd June Plan

Chapters 4, 5, 15, and 16

The new year brought a new Viceroy, a new date, and a new policy. At the heart of Lord Wavell’s ‘dismissal’, was what HMG termed a ‘wide divergence of policy’ over the manner in which British colonial withdrawal was to take place.¹⁸⁵ Mountbatten was approached by HMG to be the new Viceroy and Wavell was asked back home by the Prime Minister to force his resignation—‘Cold, ungracious and indefinite, the letter of a small man’ goes the noting in his journal on Attlee’s letter ‘dismissing’ him.¹⁸⁶ Lord Wavell, fearing a wave of unrest, had urged his government in Britain to set a fixed date for a phased withdrawal from different regions. Whitehall did not deem it necessary to fix a date for an imminent departure of British forces¹⁸⁷ but agreed in principle to fix a time limit for their departure.¹⁸⁸

Notwithstanding HMG’s initial stance of maintaining a close relationship with the Indian leadership to stave off unrest, the proposed policy statement, which was to be made on 20 February 1947 by the British Cabinet on India, was gone ahead without any consultation, with the date for British withdrawal fixed at a date no later than June 1948. This statement came amid deep misgivings expressed by prominent officials at Whitehall, including the Secretary of State, who thought that ‘even though the work of the Constituent Assembly proceeded without further delay, it might well be that by June, 1948 there would be no central government to which power could be transferred’.¹⁸⁹ The proposed policy statement was a harbinger of the political impasse which would mar the transition in India in the coming months. In India, Evan Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab, which had become a flashpoint of conflict, termed it a

¹⁸¹ Chapter 3, Document Nos 15, 16, 18, 19.

¹⁸² Chapter 14, Document No. 8.

¹⁸³ Chapter 14, Document No. 11.

¹⁸⁴ Chapter 14, Document No. 4.

¹⁸⁵ Chapter 4, Document No. 10.

¹⁸⁶ Chapter 4, Document No. 21.

¹⁸⁷ See ‘Note by Joint Planning Committee’, Chapter 4, Document No. 10.

¹⁸⁸ Chapter 4, Document No. 5.

¹⁸⁹ Chapter 4, Document No. 11.

'break-down statement'. Further, due to an absence of consensus, the provinces at the centre of the storm now faced an uncertain but decidedly violent future with the British washing their hands off them.¹⁹⁰

The announcement on 20 February 1947 of HMG's statement on Indian policy fractured whatever political consensus existed. With regard to the princely states that had not been able to align themselves within sections as provided for by the Cabinet Mission, the British government intended to 'maintain relations with the states by adjustment of agreements'.¹⁹¹ The larger implications of this statement implied that freedom was now virtually at India's doorstep, but the central question was to whom power was to devolve. The fixing of June 1948 as the cut-off date for British withdrawal made contenders acutely conscious of the power and responsibility that could now come to them. However, political settlement seemed unlikely given the acute disagreement over the Cabinet Mission Plan, the reluctance of certain provinces to go into sections and the League members' refusal to join the Constituent Assembly.

The imminent departure of the British by June 1948 set in motion a series of developments across political parties to decide upon the kind of government to come up after British withdrawal. The failure of the Cabinet Mission Plan made the British uneasy and this was reflected in the government's hurry to search for viable models within which power could be transferred. One such model came from the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, which envisaged a Muslim-majority Pakistan, a predominantly Hindu Hindustan, and princely states, each of which in turn, becoming 'forms of Dominions'¹⁹² with the centre of power remaining in Delhi and administering reserved subjects such as defence and foreign affairs. Questions were also raised about the creation of Pakistan and the way it would be able to raise, protect, and finance its defence forces to resist 'Russia and Hindustan at one and the same time'.¹⁹³

As the month of March passed, talk of partition gained momentum. Muslim League claimed Pakistan, despite deep doubts over its viability, as a counter to Congress' demands for devolving power to the Constituent Assembly, a body of which the League was deeply suspicious. Though the Cabinet Mission had failed spectacularly, it ironically provided for sections of provinces which could be surgically excised from 'Hindustan' and transformed into 'Pakistan'.¹⁹⁴ Two plans for transfer of power eventually emerged from this tangle—Plan Union which rested on the now defunct Cabinet Mission Plan, and the ill-named 'Plan Balkan' which ensured a truncated Pakistan but hoped for a unified centre until the armed forces were divided.¹⁹⁵ A unified centre was pitched for by the British even though conversations increasingly tilted in favour of a 'Balkanised' subcontinent.

The absence of any workable political consensus eventually paved the way for a British-backed plan for transfer of power on 3 June 1947 to two 'dominions', with princely states entering into independent treaty arrangements with the British. The making of this plan was fraught with enormous political ill-will and cast a shadow on the division of the armed forces.¹⁹⁶ Jawaharlal Nehru in a note on the draft proposals of this plan remarked that it 'threw overboard

¹⁹⁰ Chapter 4, Document No. 14; also see Chapter 5, Document No. 18.

¹⁹¹ Chapter 5, Document No. 1.

¹⁹² Chapter 15, Document No. 8.

¹⁹³ Chapter 15, Document No. 10.

¹⁹⁴ Chapter 15, Document No. 17.

¹⁹⁵ Chapter 15, Document Nos 20, 22.

¹⁹⁶ Chapter 16, Document No. 3.

the Cabinet plan...invited balkanization, would provoke civil conflict and demoralize the police and central services'.¹⁹⁷ Nehru's primary objections were to the fact that power would devolve on 'consenting' provinces and peoples. By implication, this left out large Muslim-majority areas which would be free to opt out of the Union, something which the Congress had been against. He also expressed grave doubts over states entering into treaties with the British if they so favoured, as this could jeopardize the territorial integrity of India. Jinnah, when shown the draft announcement, stood his ground on his conception of Pakistan, limiting the possibility of a settlement.¹⁹⁸

The proposed transfer of power also dealt uneasily with the imminent division of defence forces,¹⁹⁹ the debate on the division of Punjab and Bengal²⁰⁰ and finally the demand to connect the resulting 'truncated' Pakistan by means of an east-west land corridor traversing India.²⁰¹

As for the division of the provinces of Punjab and Bengal, various actors within the Congress and the League and the Viceroy took positions on the question from different vantage points. There was the voice of Gandhiji, who opposed any division prior to British withdrawal.²⁰² Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, member of the Interim Government, seconded Gandhiji's views by reiterating the demand for the preservation of the unity of Punjab.²⁰³ An impassioned plea on behalf of the Sikhs was made by Baldev Singh, member of the Interim Government, to Lord Mountbatten on the eve of the 3rd June declaration, which sought safeguards and special privileges that would protect his community from the 'danger of being riven into two'.²⁰⁴ In the case of Bengal, the Viceroy, H.S. Suhrawardy, K.S. Roy and Sarat Bose²⁰⁵ were against the partition of the province and in favour of united Bengal; Jinnah wanted the whole of Bengal to come to Pakistan;²⁰⁶ Patel doubted the sincerity of the proposal for a united Bengal,²⁰⁷ and given the ground reality, Nehru was not hopeful about the prospects of undivided Bengal or the Punjab.²⁰⁸

Contending with Communalism

Chapters 6 and 17

Beginning with Calcutta in August 1946, the months leading up to the partition of India saw the worst kind of communal rioting the subcontinent has ever witnessed. This continuing conflict was compounded by the repercussions of the political decisions made in New Delhi and provincial capitals. Communal violence spread like a prairie fire, wreaking havoc in Calcutta, Bihar, Rawalpindi, and of course Noakhali, remembered today chiefly for Mahatma Gandhi's

¹⁹⁷ Chapter 16, Document Nos 2, 12.

¹⁹⁸ Chapter 16, Document Nos 14, 28.

¹⁹⁹ Chapter 4, Document Nos 16, 19.

²⁰⁰ Chapter 15, Document Nos 24, 30, 34, 36, 37.

²⁰¹ Chapter 16, Document Nos 16, 20, 21, 27, 31.

²⁰² Chapter 15, Document Nos 40, 42, 45 and Chapter 16, Document No. 35.

²⁰³ Chapter 15, Document No. 37.

²⁰⁴ Chapter 16, Document No. 39.

²⁰⁵ Chapter 21, Document No. 57.

²⁰⁶ Chapter 15, Document No. 17.

²⁰⁷ Chapter 21, Document No. 53.

²⁰⁸ Chapter 5, Document No. 5.

visit there which brought a healing touch to a devastated region and its people.²⁰⁹ The Hindu Mahasabha in its session at Gorakhpur in December 1946 and later in a Working Committee meeting in February 1947 called for 'a constructive programme with a view to canalize the energies of the vast concourse of the assembled Hindus into a fruitful channel',²¹⁰ advocating 'shuddhi' or re-conversion into Hinduism, seeking revenge for attacks on Hindus in Bihar, Noakhali, and so on, and opposing residuary powers being given to the provinces. The position of the Mahasabha, which chose to ignore its own contribution to the communal situation, was pitted against that of the Muslim League whose propaganda in the provinces in the wake of its so-called civil disobedience movement rolled over into widespread violence.

Jawaharlal Nehru's inaugural address to the UP Political Conference at Mau on 20 April 1947 illuminated the harmful effects of communalism and the need to secure the economic structure of the Union in an atmosphere of peace and harmony.²¹¹

Communalism in the Provinces

Chapters 7, 8, 18, and 19

The Muslim League called for a mass 'civil disobedience movement' (a term self-consciously borrowed from the Congress repertoire) in the context of the ban on volunteer bodies by the Punjab government in an attempt to control communal frenzy. On 24 January 1947, the Punjab ministry declared unlawful (under the Criminal Law [Amendment] Act of 1908) the 'private volunteer bodies' of both the Muslim League and the RSS. The reactions were sharp and swift. The League's protest took a communal slant.²¹² High ranking leaders of the League also courted arrest as they 'interpreted the declaration in respect of Muslim League National Guards as an attack upon the Muslim League as a political party'.²¹³ In the ensuing conflict between the government and the League, the former eventually decided to withdraw its order on the volunteer bodies four days after it had issued it²¹⁴ and released the detenus to show its keenness in securing a truce with the League.

It was nearly a month after the League's widespread agitation and the arrests of its leaders that a 'compromise' between the League and the Punjab government was sought to be negotiated.²¹⁵ Talks took place for the withdrawal by the government of the ban imposed on public and civil liberties, specifically the release of political prisoners and the restoration of the right to hold public meetings.²¹⁶ The movement was finally called off when the agreement was signed between the two sides based on the above conditions; the ban on processions was, however, not lifted.²¹⁷

Punjab politics got a further jolt when the coalition ministry in Punjab, with Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana of the Unionist Party as its premier, resigned on 3 March 1947. Tiwana cited the necessity of having in place a fully representative ministry when the British left, a prospect

²⁰⁹ Chapter 6, Document No. 2.

²¹⁰ Chapter 6, Document Nos 7, 9.

²¹¹ Chapter 17, Document No. 12.

²¹² Chapter 19 (A), Document Nos 3, 14, 21, 23.

²¹³ Chapter 7 (A), Document No. 20.

²¹⁴ Chapter 7 (A), Document Nos 8, 9.

²¹⁵ Chapter 7 (A), Document Nos 25, 26, 27.

²¹⁶ Chapter 7 (A), Document No. 28.

²¹⁷ Chapter 7 (A), Document No. 30.

currently not in sight with the Muslim League against them.²¹⁸ The resignation set off a process of further tangling the complex political scenario in the Punjab. Negotiations were carried on to get the Muslim League to form the government²¹⁹ amidst opposition from sections of Sikhs and Hindus.²²⁰ It was in the context of the League's extra-constitutional assault on a duly elected ministry that the demand for partition of the province by the Hindu and Sikh minorities gathered momentum.

A section of Hindu-Sikh opinion, as reported by the Punjab Governor, Jenkins, in a telegram to Lord Wavell²²¹ in turn had their own ambitious agenda to arm their private militias. Sections of Sikh opinion also favoured a separate state with a sizeable majority of their own men to defy both the Muslim League's 'Pakistan campaign' and the Congress' indifference to their plight.²²² However, Sikh Scheduled Caste leaders like Sardar Hari Singh Nirbhay were aligned with the Muslim League's agitation and politics, primarily because they thought that an 'akhand Hindustan' would sound the death-knell for communities like the Mazhabi Sikhs and other minorities.²²³ A deputation of Harijans from Punjab, however, supported the demand for division of Punjab.²²⁴

The League's Assam agitation bore a striking resemblance to the actions carried out in Punjab and NWFP in terms of the propaganda against the ruling government. However, the issues which the League took up here were largely socio-economic. At the heart of the so-called civil disobedience movement was the issue of the labourers from Bengal (majority of them being Muslims) who occupied large swathes of grazing and cultivable lands and now faced imminent eviction from the Assam valley under orders from the government.²²⁵

Accounts of communal disturbances in Bengal in 1947 have focussed on the happenings at Calcutta, Noakhali, and Tippera. The range and the causes of violence in Bengal were manifold. Starting from minor skirmishes and clashes around religious processions, it transformed into violent killings and looting in cities like Calcutta, Rajshahi, and Dacca and was especially directed against women, leading the Legislative Assembly on 5 March 1947 to call for action against the rioters.²²⁶ In the midst of this communal disorder, talk of dividing the province into Hindu- and Muslim-majority areas started gaining ground, and more so among the minorities distrustful of the government.²²⁷ A characteristic feature of the communal frenzy in Bengal was the attacks on the police forces, where Gurkha policemen were attacked by Muslims and Hindus targeted Punjabi Muslim policemen believed to have been brought in by Suhrawardy to Calcutta.²²⁸

Bihar was at the centre of communal carnage in the months of October–November 1946. Political debate revolved around the issues of rehabilitation of victims and the restoration of normalcy in the region, over which the opposition in the Bihar assembly eventually moved

²¹⁸ Chapter 7 (A), Document Nos 36, 40.

²¹⁹ Chapter 7 (A), Document Nos 42, 43, 47.

²²⁰ Chapter 7 (A), Document Nos 48, 53.

²²¹ Chapter 7 (A), Document No. 19.

²²² Chapter 7 (A), Document No. 32.

²²³ Chapter 7 (A), Document No. 38.

²²⁴ Chapter 20, Document No. 21.

²²⁵ Chapter 19 (A), Document No. 4.

²²⁶ Chapter 8 (A), Document No. 10.

²²⁷ Chapter 18 (A), Document No. 3.

²²⁸ Chapter 18 (A), Document No. 17.

a no-confidence motion against the ministry.²²⁹ League leaders demanded the institution of comprehensive land allotment programmes which could reinstate confidence among Muslims in the Congress ministry.²³⁰ Calls for the division of the province on religious lines also started to gain an audience.²³¹ The impact of Gandhiji's presence in the province was tremendous, bringing as he did an element of introspection to the Congress fold to check elements of communalism in society and in politics.²³² Gandhi's presence, coming as it did three decades after his Champaran campaign (which relieved Hindu and Muslim peasants of their oppressive colonial revenue burdens) made his call for communal harmony especially resonant in Bihar.

The political salience of the capital city of Delhi did not help matters much for its residents during early 1947 as far as communal relations were concerned. The resignation of the Punjab ministry and events in Noakhali, Bihar, and the NWFP had a direct influence over the capital. The communal situation in Delhi continued to worsen, making it difficult to discern 'political events from the communal' and much thought went into avoiding the politicization of government servants.²³³

The heartland, termed in colonial parlance the 'United Provinces of Agra and Oudh', was not untarnished either. Large scale rioting started in November 1946 with the Garhmukteshwar riots, whose impact was widespread. In an attempt to control the situation, a particularly harsh piece of legislation called the UP Maintenance of Public Order Bill came to be tabled, for which the Ministry was charged with repressing the conflict instead of redressing the underlying issues.²³⁴ The communal situation in UP was sought to be controlled by measures such as the establishment and strengthening of the 'peace committees' and Home Guards contingents and the constitution of police forces in consonance with the diverse social composition of its population.²³⁵ Sindh grappled with the exodus of its minority Hindu populace along with Parsis and Christians during the tense months of 1947²³⁶ with grievous economic consequences for the province.

The Politics of Division: The Case of Punjab, Bengal, NWFP, and Sylhet

Chapters 9, 21, and 22

The case for a 'Sikh-Hindu' majority province in the Punjab gained ground in the context of the Cabinet Mission Plan's recommendations which placed Punjab in the section dominated by the Muslim League. The Sikhs were acutely conscious of the political, social, and economic ramifications of this move, and their community was the first to campaign for a separate province for themselves. The initiative came from Gyani Kartar Singh, a Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) in the Constituent Assembly, who resented the fact that 'map-makers conveniently ignored the presence of Sikhs and Hindus in the central, eastern and southern Punjab'²³⁷ which comprised the divisions of Ambala and Jullundur (now Jalandhar), and districts of Amritsar,

²²⁹ Chapter 8 (B), Document No. 14.

²³⁰ Chapter 8 (B), Document No. 18.

²³¹ Chapter 18 (B), Document Nos 14, 19, 20.

²³² Chapter 8 (B), Document Nos 11, 24, 30.

²³³ Chapter 8 (D), Document No. 3; Chapter 18 (E), Document No. 7.

²³⁴ Chapter 8 (G), Document No. 3.

²³⁵ Chapter 18 (I), Document Nos 4, 5, 6.

²³⁶ Chapter 18 (H), Document Nos 7, 11.

²³⁷ Chapter 9 (A), Document No. 1.

Gurdaspur, and Lahore. Besides campaigning for an autonomous province, Sardar Ujjal Singh, a close colleague of Gyani Kartar Singh in the Constituent Assembly, also advanced the demand for 'full Sikh representation in the Minority Advisory Committees' which were being constituted under the aegis of the Assembly²³⁸ to ensure safeguards for the Sikh community.

The demand for the partition of Punjab and the opposition to it led to the situation spiralling out of hand. Delivering a quick rebuttal to the Congress' resolution which called for the division of Punjab in the event of the division of the country²³⁹ and the concurrent Sikh claims, the League leader Firoz Khan Noon pointed out that the Congress decision to divide Punjab did not address the concerns of the Sikhs, given that state enterprises, riverine systems, Sikh shrines, and significant enclaves of Sikhs in Western Punjab were not taken into account. The Muslim League contended that the avowed aim of the Congress to divide the province was intended only to subsume eastern Punjab and make it a part of 'Akhand Hindustan'.²⁴⁰ The only viable alternative according to the Muslim League was to have Punjab in a sectional grouping, but with enough safeguards for the Sikhs on grounds of religion, political representation, language, and employment.

Central to the problem of assigning districts to India or Pakistan was the issue of determining which community was in a majority in the district. Though a section of the Sikhs felt very strongly about an autonomous province for their people, a 'predominantly Sikh or Muslim or Hindu' district remained only in the realm of speculation. Demographic analyses of districts like Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, and Amritsar reflected wafer-thin majorities of either Muslims or Hindus with Sikhs being in a majority only in a few tehsils. This maze of communities in Punjab made any talk of division along religious lines complicated and fraught with grave communal repercussions.²⁴¹ Then there was also the question of the Jats whose support to the Sikhs in the division of Punjab was sometimes doubted, as by the Governor of Punjab, who thought Jats might not be willing to be 'included in the Sikh state'.²⁴²

The debate over Punjab's partition was also tied to economic questions. This was clearly reflected in the resolution passed by the Working Committee of the SAD on 16 April 1947 in which it listed 'landed property' as one of the four terms of reference which should be used to demarcate the provincial boundaries.²⁴³ This concern also surfaced in a memorandum submitted by Punjab representatives in the Constituent Assembly to Lord Ismay on 1 May 1947 which stated that the justification for the claim to almost half of the Punjab province by non-Muslims lay in the fact that 'more than 50 % of the urban and rural property in the province' lay in the latter's hands.²⁴⁴ Master Tara Singh made a case for partition on the basis of the property held by Muslims and non-Muslims, as 'an exchange of population implied exchange of property as well'.²⁴⁵ However, the League leader Khan Iftikhar Hussain Khan of Mamdot attacked Master Tara Singh for taking a position which went against the 'universally accepted principle of partition on basis of population' and asserted that the 'Sikhs had now started assessing the

²³⁸ Chapter 9 (A), Document No. 5.

²³⁹ Chapter 9 (A), Document No. 8; Chapter 20, Document No. 22.

²⁴⁰ Chapter 9 (A), Document Nos 9, 12.

²⁴¹ Chapter 9 (A), Document No. 13; Chapter 20, Document Nos 1, 4, 8.

²⁴² Chapter 20, Document Nos 5, 7, 24.

²⁴³ Chapter 20, Document No. 9.

²⁴⁴ Chapter 20, Document No. 16.

²⁴⁵ Chapter 20, Document No. 19.

disastrous consequences accruing to their community from a division of the Punjab' since they would not only 'pass under the perpetual domination of the Hindu majority in eastern Punjab but shall also lose all their economic stake in the west'.²⁴⁶

In the midst of increasing communal violence, with no political compromise imminent, the Congress under pressure to stake its claim assertively,²⁴⁷ the Arya Samaj pitched its case in the ongoing debate. The carefully worded petition implicitly exhorted the government to take into consideration their shrines, socio-cultural associations, their 'holy city' (Lahore), and their 'holy land of Punjab' while drawing boundaries across the province.²⁴⁸

The political fight over the partition of Bengal can perhaps be best comprehended through a 'gallup poll' which the nationalist paper *Amrit Bazar Patrika* carried out among its readers on 23 March 1947. Asking if readers wanted a division of Bengal or not, the newspaper requested responses in the definite forms of 'only yes' or 'only no'.²⁴⁹ This opinion exercise was symptomatic of the deeper undercurrents of animosity and resentment which flowed in Bengal at this time with political parties and various sections of the population aligned to different visions of Bengal—united, divided along religious lines, united but autonomous, or united but sovereign.

The plan for United Bengal, proposed by Suhrawardy and supported by Sarat Bose and K.S. Roy, with limited or no links with any form of a central Union (which could either have been Pakistan or India or both) was vehemently opposed by the Congress and certain other quasi-political organizations which wanted a partition of Bengal into Hindu-majority regions (west) which were linked to a central Union and a Muslim-majority region (east) which could forge links in any way it wanted. The Congress favoured partition in order to protect the rights of the Hindus (over which an independent Bengal could ride roughshod with its Muslim majority and do away with the instruments of joint electorates, universal adult franchise, and other minority safeguards).²⁵⁰

Certain other political and professional organizations also supported the partition of Bengal, chief among them being the Hindu Mahasabha, whose leader S.P. Mookerjee urged the Congress to take a more assertive stand against the League's attempt to carve out an independent Bengal.²⁵¹ The Socialist Party, in the words of its leader Dr Rammanohar Lohia, called for an agitation for 'realizing two simple demands of democracy, land to the tiller and basic wage to the labourer' to fulfil the emotional need that gave rise to the demand for Pakistan and Hindu homelands.²⁵² The Jatiya Banga Sangathan Samiti,²⁵³ the Indian Association,²⁵⁴ and the Bengali National Chamber of Commerce²⁵⁵ were some of the organizations which raised the pitch for a separate non-Muslim province of Bengal on economic, commercial, and administrative

²⁴⁶ Chapter 20, Document No. 25.

²⁴⁷ Chapter 20, Document No. 29.

²⁴⁸ Chapter 20, Document No. 31.

²⁴⁹ Chapter 21, Document No. 1.

²⁵⁰ Chapter 21, Document No. 8.

²⁵¹ Chapter 9 (B), Document Nos 2, 6, 8, 9.

²⁵² Chapter 9 (B), Document No. 12.

²⁵³ Chapter 9 (B), Document No. 7.

²⁵⁴ Chapter 21, Document No. 56.

²⁵⁵ Chapter 21, Document No. 25.

grounds. It is pertinent to point out that significant sections of the middle-classes involving lawyers, students, merchants, and so on, in Bengal advocated partition at this time.

Sections of Scheduled Castes and other Backward Castes expressed their opinions on the issue of partition. The contending parties fielded their own representatives to canvass their political agendas. While the Muslim League fielded the leader of the Scheduled Castes, J.N. Mandal, Law Member of the Interim Government, to assert that 'majority of non-Muslims were opposed to the division of Bengal'²⁵⁶ as a counter to Congress arguments, the Congress fielded the Depressed Class leader P.R. Thakur to 'repudiate the contention of Mandal' and stated that a 'sovereign Bengal would mean perpetual communal strife'.²⁵⁷

The conflict over Bengal revolved around another axis—the status of the city of Calcutta. This would not have been a major issue had Calcutta not been a wealthy port city and a bustling centre for trade and commerce, which served the whole of Bengal province. Calcutta was indeed the nerve centre of Bengal, but with voices clamouring for partition, a decision on the city could not be postponed. Lord Mountbatten had reservations against granting Calcutta the status of a 'free city' because it might not help in placating either of the two communities.²⁵⁸ Some in the government held out the Calcutta issue as an 'important bargaining point in inducing the League to accept a truncated Pakistan in Bengal'.²⁵⁹ In a memorandum released from its district office in Calcutta on 31 May 1947, the Muslim League asserted its right over the city on the basis of the preponderance of Muslims in marine and riverine activities, ranging from navigation to logistics.²⁶⁰

With battles for political control going on in the provinces of Punjab and Bengal, it was hardly possible that their neighbouring regions would not get involved in them. The NWFP under the leadership of the 'Khan brothers' had always presented a formidable challenge to overarching imperialist governing arrangements. With the departure of the British now imminent, the NWFP became conscious of its own future status and relationship with India or else Pakistan and sought to enter into agreements with them while keeping the option of a sovereign 'Pathanistan' open.²⁶¹ An important part of these agreements was the issue of a referendum which became a major bone of contention. The Muslim League pressed for the imposition of Section 93 and the carrying out of a referendum;²⁶² however, the Congress was against it primarily because there was a certain amount of dissent on the issue, not only within the Congress, but also within the NWFP government. Jawaharlal Nehru, in a letter to Lord Mountbatten dated 10 May 1947, reinforced his commitment to the idea that the 'will of the people of the Frontier Province should be consulted before final decisions in regard to the position of the province are taken. But it is very important when this is done and in what context'.²⁶³ Similar debates took place over the position of Sylhet with rival claimants on either sides of the political fence.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁶ Chapter 21, Document No. 16.

²⁵⁷ Chapter 21, Document Nos 18, 60.

²⁵⁸ Chapter 21, Document No. 22.

²⁵⁹ Chapter 21, Document No. 26.

²⁶⁰ Chapter 21, Document No. 61.

²⁶¹ Chapter 22 (A), Document Nos 6, 11.

²⁶² Chapter 22 (A), Document No. 2.

²⁶³ Chapter 22 (A), Document No. 4.

²⁶⁴ Chapter 22 (B), Document Nos 1, 2.

Volunteer Organizations, Minorities, and Refugees

Chapters 10, 11, 12, 23, and 24

The importance of volunteer organizations which sprang up in different parts of the subcontinent and were often affiliated to various political organizations can be gauged from the amount of time and energy which the provincial and central governments devoted towards monitoring them. The ban on these organizations in Punjab (the private volunteer bodies of Muslim League and the RSS) was one of the reasons which led the Muslim League to start off the so-called civil disobedience movement. Being continuously under the scanner of governments, accusations of being communal were often levelled against these volunteer bodies.²⁶⁵

One of the most under-represented actors on the stage of partition politics were the different minorities inhabiting the country. These included Buddhists, Anglo-Indians, Scheduled Castes, and Gurkhas, among others.²⁶⁶ Whereas a section of these minorities rallied around the existing political groups of the time, certain others like the All India Scheduled Castes Federation under the leadership of Dr Ambedkar steered clear of any political affiliation, and denounced the Congress as 'an interloper to disrupt the strength and solidarity of the organisation'.²⁶⁷ Scheduled Castes were witness to an immense wave of politicization. A section of the community led by J.N. Mandal and L. Lobo campaigned to unite them with the politics of the League,²⁶⁸ while eight Harijan MLAs in the Punjab Assembly talked of the false propaganda which was nurturing the myth that Harijans were all set to join the League.²⁶⁹

The displacement of millions as a result of partition did not take cognizance of categories like Harijans, Scheduled Castes, or Anglo-Indians; all were part of large masses of people traversing large distances and facing extreme violence. The exodus of those people who came to be called 'refugees' began months before the actual partition of the subcontinent came into effect. The relief and rehabilitation measures were phenomenal, not only because they were put into effect over large swathes of land, but also because they were implemented in a context of limited resources and budgets. A large portion of rehabilitation comprised compensation to riot victims.²⁷⁰ Relief measures also had to be extended to people migrating from one province to another or when a section of the population had to be evacuated, as in Punjab's Jhelum district²⁷¹ and in the case of Bihar refugees migrating to Sindh.²⁷² At the same time relief camps were set up and massive rehabilitation plans put in place to induce people to come back to places which they had left in terror.²⁷³ 'Economic' resettlement of refugees was a complex affair. Changes in demography, terrain, and occupational structures dictated these measures and were behind the labels of 'usefulness' of certain refugees while others were left to fend for themselves. Sindh was a particular case in point, where Mohammad Yunus of the

²⁶⁵ Chapters 10 and 24.

²⁶⁶ Chapter 11, Document No. 3.

²⁶⁷ Chapter 11, Document No. 1.

²⁶⁸ Chapter 11, Document Nos 5, 6.

²⁶⁹ Chapter 11, Document No. 7.

²⁷⁰ Chapter 12, Document Nos 2, 5.

²⁷¹ Chapter 12, Document No. 17.

²⁷² Chapter 12, Document No. 18.

²⁷³ Chapter 23, Document Nos 2, 3, 8, 13.

Central Relief Committee, responded to queries about the prospects of the rehabilitation of Bihar Muslims by saying that on no account should the latter go to Sindh.

The relief funds being used to deliver services to the refugees also came under controversy. Jawaharlal Nehru, in a letter dated 14 April 1947, reiterated that relief work was humanitarian work which lost all virtue if it was under 'communal garb'.²⁷⁴ The position of abducted women and their recovery was perhaps the most tragic and haunting aspect of the communal situation. It was suggested by Firoz Khan Noon, in an interview with the Punjab Governor, Evan Jenkins, on 24 March 1947, that granting an 'amnesty' would perhaps 'accelerate the recovery of abducted non-Muslim women' while in Bihar, the Premier publicly stated that those who returned women within a stipulated time period would be seen as their protectors.²⁷⁵ The issue of abducted women and their recovery caused much distress, and women were located and relocated to their parental or marital homes with very mixed consequences for themselves and their families.

²⁷⁴ Chapter 23, Document No. 6.

²⁷⁵ Chapter 23, Document No. 1.

Acknowledgements

First of all I would like to thank the distinguished editorial board of the *Towards Freedom* series, a flagship project of the Indian Council of Historical Research, who invited me to edit the volume on 1947 upon the untimely death of the eminent historian, Ravinder Kumar. I was particularly gratified to be invited to be the editor as my research supervisor and teacher at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Sarvepalli Gopal, had been the founder and first General Editor of the series. The task before me was not an easy one, as Sarvepalli Gopal, Partha Sarathi Gupta, and Basudev Chatterjee had set exacting standards as editors. Ravinder Kumar, assisted by Gyanesh Kudaisya and others, had done some preliminary work, which I gratefully acknowledge, but most of the work remained to be done. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya as the General Editor, and Arjun Dev as the Coordinator, extended total support in a variety of ways over the years, for which I wish to record my appreciation. At ICHR, the Chairman, Basudev Chatterjee, Member Secretary, Ishrat Alam, and earlier, Prabhat Shukla, were always there to take care of the administrative concerns.

There was a race against time as the editorial board kept the ship aloft in the face of uninformed politically motivated criticism when the government of the day put two volumes on hold, possibly because it was not convenient for the record of certain political forces to appear as it was, warts and all. If I ended up devoting six years to assist India towards freedom, in a manner of speaking, it was only because being on the freedom movement trail has become a way of life. Inspired by Bipan Chandra, our much loved teacher, some of us had joined him many summers ago in recording the oral histories of activists of the freedom movement. This was followed by co-authoring *India's Struggle for Independence*, which is now in its fifty-fifth edition. It was at his instance that I accepted the editorship of this volume at a time when I seemed to be done with 1947, having spent two decades in that time zone. Any value the reader finds in this work is because of the intellectual rigour and passion for the study of this period of history I have absorbed from him.

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In the few cases documents in different Indian languages where have been included, translations have been done by my students. Rahul Kumar Ishwar translated from Hindi, Lakhimi Datta consulted copies of *Axomiya* and translated passages from Assamese and Shweta Shetty translated a document from Marathi.

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picture of a hard won freedom when it seemed I could not see beyond the minutiae of the local communal riot. When I was invited to be editor of the volume on 1947, the General Editor of the series estimated the work would take me six months. It has devoured sabbaticals, leave, vacations, and hours after office and weekends for over six years. At such times, my children, Varun and Srikant, were a much needed reality check, reminding me that there was life beyond 1947. Perhaps I so easily seemed to live in 1947 because the big story of 1947, the subject of this volume, intersected with the small tale of 1947 of my parents, Vidya Dhar and Savitri, who, like countless displaced persons, crossed the newly etched boundaries to start new lives in a refugee colony in Delhi. As a child I remember that the reference point in many a conversation was 1947. In a sense working on this volume on 1947 was only a continuation of the family tale. It is a small tribute to my parents.

Abbreviations

AICC	All India Congress Committee
AIHM	All India Hindu Mahasabha
AIML	All India Muslim League
AISPC	All India States Peoples Conference
APA	Associated Press Agency
API	Associated Press of India
CAB	Cabinet Papers
CA	Constituent Assembly
C-in-C	Commander in Chief
CPI	Communist Party of India
CWC	Congress Working Committee
<i>CWMG</i>	<i>Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi</i>
<i>CWSVP</i>	<i>Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel</i>
DC	District Collector
DIG	Deputy Inspector General
DIK	Dera Ismail Khan
GOC-in-C	Governing Officer Commander in Chief
HE	His Excellency
HMG	His Majesty's Government
HM	His Majesty
ICS	Imperial Civil Services
INA	Indian National Army
IOR	India Office Records
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
NAI	National Archives of India
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
OPI	Orient Press of India
PRO	Public Records Office
RAF	Royal Air Force
RIAF	Royal Indian Air Force
RIN	Royal Indian Navy
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh
SAD	Shiromani Akali Dal

SDO	Sub Divisional Officer
SPC	<i>Sardar Patel Correspondence</i>
SWJN	<i>Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru</i>
TOP	<i>Transfer of Power</i>
UPI	United Press of India
VCO	Viceroy's Commissioned Officer

Calendar of Documents

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31.	18.3.1947	'Haryana Prant Will Resist Communal Domination'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	494
32.	19.3.1947	Congress Criticism of Punjab Police	Extract from a Letter from Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. IX, pp. 990-1	495
33.	19.3.1947	Migration of Muslims into East Punjab	Letter from Malik Mohammad to M.A. Jinnah	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 309-10	495
34.	19.3.1947	Critical Situation in Punjab and NWFP	Letter from Gokul Chand Narang to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, pp. 282-4	496
35.	20.3.1947	Report from Punjab Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report for the First Half of March 1947 for Punjab	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI	497
36.	20.3.1947	Attitude of Ghazanfar Ali Khan towards the Communal Situation	Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Wavell	Lionel Carter (Ed.), <i>Punjab Politics</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 93-4	500
37.	22.3.1947	Atrocities Committed against Hindus and Sikhs	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Wavell	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 15-16	500
38.	22.3.1947	A Note on the Communal Outbreak in Punjab	Letter from Claude Auchinleck to G.E.B. Abell Enclosing a Report by Gen. Messervy	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 111, NMML	501
39.	22.3.1947	'Terrible Happenings in Punjab—League Coercing Minorities, Says J.P. '	Extract from a Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	505
40.	22.3.1947	Directions for Observance of 'Punjab Day'	Letter from Ashutosh Lahiry	AIHM Papers, File No. C-150, NMML	506
41.	22.3.1947	Political Parties Responsible for Communal Flare Up	Letter from Shareef Mateen to M.A. Jinnah	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, p. 366	506

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1.	6.1.1947	Call for Halting Communal Warfare	Extract from G.B. Pant's Speech at a Public Meeting in Hapur, Report from <i>National Herald</i>	B.R. Nanda (Ed.), <i>Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant</i> , Vol. XI, p. 94.	507
2.	16.1.1947	Riots in Allahabad	Extracts from G.B. Pant's Speech in the UP Legislative Assembly	B.R. Nanda (Ed.), <i>Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant</i> , Vol. XI, pp. 100-5	508
3.	13-18.1.1947	UP Maintenance of Public Order Bill, 1947	Extracts from G.B. Pant's speech in the UP Legislative Assembly	B.R. Nanda (Ed.), <i>Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant</i> , Vol. XI, pp. 109-34	509
4.	19.1.1947	Hapur Riots	Report by Algu Rai	AICC Papers, File No. CL-10/1946-47, NMML (Translated from Hindi)	512
5.	23.1.1947	'Hapur Riot'	Report by Phool Singh, Secretary, United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee	AICC Papers, File No. CL-10/1947, NMML	513
6.	8.2.1947	Collective Fine Imposed on Non-Muslims of Hapur	Letter from Ratan Lal Garg to Jugal Kishore	AICC Papers, File No. G-10/1947, NMML	515
7.	9.2.1947	'Communal Situation in United Provinces'	Resolution Passed by the Working Committee of the All India Hindu Mahasabha at New Delhi	AIHM Papers, File No. P. 108, NMML	515
8.	26.2.1947	Enquiry into Hapur Riots	Letter from Jugal Kishore to Rafi Ahmad Kidwai	AICC Papers, File No. G-10/1947, NMML	516
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11.	15.3.1947	‘9 Killed: 14 Injured in Benares’	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	517

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7.	8.3.1947	Hindus and Sikhs to Oppose Pakistan Together	Resolution Passed by the Working Committee of the All India Hindu Mahasabha	AIHM Papers, File No. C-155, NMML	529
8.	8.3.1947	Division of Punjab	Extracts from the Resolution Passed by the Congress Working Committee	AICC Papers, File No. G-43/1947, NMML	532
9.	11.3.1947	‘Meet at Round Table Conference—Punjab Problem’	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	532
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15.	22.3.1947	Support for Partition of Punjab	Report by the Information and Broadcasting Department, New Delhi	IOR, L/P& J/10/78, Acc. No.3651, NAI	538
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7.	6.2.1947	Report from CP and Berar	Extract from the Fortnightly Report for CP and Berar for the Second Half of January 1947	Home Poll (I), 18/1/47, NAI	568
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12.	8.3.1947	Report from CP and Berar	Extract from the Fortnightly Report from CP and Berar for the Second Half of February 1947	Home Poll. (I), File No. 18/2/47, NAI	580
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2.	6.1.1947	Safeguards for Minority Rights	Extracts from the Proceedings of Bengal Provincial Buddhist Association	AICC Papers, File No. CL-3 (Part 3)/1946–47, NMML	584
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5.	6.3.1947	‘Muslims Will Establish Pakistan in Punjab: What Will Stone Gods Give Us?—Mandal’	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	587
6.	18.3.1947	Unite Minorities behind the Muslim League	Letter from L. Lobo to M.A. Jinnah	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 281–2	588
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18.	22.3.1947	Rehabilitation of Bihar Muslims	Letter from Yusuf A. Haroon to M.A. Jinnah	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 353-7	613
20.	22.3.1947	Gandhi Reassures Muslim Refugees	M.K. Gandhi's Talk with Women Refugees at Pipalwan	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 139-40	615

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2.	25.3.1947	Demand for Representation in Constituent Assembly	Letter from Shiv Chand (on Behalf of Scheduled Castes of Simla Hill States) to J.B. Kripalani,	AICC Papers, File No. CL-3, (Part 1)/1946-47, NMML	633
3.	31.3.1947	Parsis' Role in Building Up Modern India: Demand for Safeguards	Extract from Memorandum on Minorities by R.K. Sidhwa	B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), <i>Framing of India's Constitution</i> , Vol. II, pp. 318-22	634
4.	March/ April 1947	Demand for Proportionate Representation on Population Basis and Socio-religious and Economic Safeguards	Memorandum on the Plains Tribal People of Assam by R.N. Brahma	B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), <i>Framing of India's Constitution</i> , Vol. II, pp. 370-3.	637
5.	March/ April 1947	Sikh Interests in Punjab: Replies to the Questionnaire of the Constituent Assembly on Minorities	Extract from the Memorandum on Sikhs by Ujjal Singh and Harnam Singh	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 121, NMML	640

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7.	8.4.1947	Demand for Minority Rights by Digambar Jains	Reply to the Constituent Assembly Questionnaire by the All India Digambar Jain Parishad	AICC Papers, File No. CL-3 (Part 1), 1946-7, NMML	650
8.	11.4.1947	NWFP Tribes Oppose the Tribal Areas Sub-committee of Constituent Assembly	A Report of the Intelligence Bureau, Home Deptt	External Affairs Department, File No. 9 (71) NWA/47, NAI	653
9.	13.4.1947	Reply to the Constituent Assembly Questionnaire by an AICC Member from Andhra	Letter from M. Jagannadharao to the Secretary, Constituent Assembly Congress Party	AICC Papers, File No. CL-3/ (Part 1), 1946-7, NMML	654
10.	15.4.1947	Demands for Political Representation and Socio-economic Safeguards for Depressed Classes	Memorandum to the Minorities Sub-Committee from the Working Committee of the All India Adi-Hindu Depressed Classes Association	B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), <i>Framing of India's Constitution</i> , Vol. II, pp. 381-3	659
11.	16.4.1947	Report of the Sub-Committee on Fundamental Rights Submitted to the Advisory Committee	Extract from a Letter from J.B. Kripalani to Vallabhbhai Patel	B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), <i>Framing of India's Constitution</i> , Vol. II, pp. 169-76	661
12.	17.4.1947	Minority Rights	Extracts from Memorandum on Minorities by S.P. Mookerjee	B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), <i>Framing of India's Constitution</i> , Vol. II, pp. 336-43.	662
13.	17-20.4.1947	Dissent to the Report of the Sub-committee on Fundamental Rights	Selected Extracts from Minutes of Dissent to This Report	B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), <i>Framing of India's Constitution</i> , Vol. II, pp. 176-98	667

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15.	23.4.1947	Interim Report of Committee on Minorities and Fundamental Rights	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to the President, Constituent Assembly	<i>Constituent Assembly Debates</i> , Vol. III, pp. 437-44	676
16.	28.4.1947	Discussion on the Report of the Committee on Union Subjects	Extract from the Proceedings of the Constituent Assembly	<i>Constituent Assembly Debates</i> , Vol. III, pp. 380-2	678
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19.	April 1947	Demand for Retention of Anglo-Indian Schools and Reservation in Civil Services	Extracts from the Memorandum on the Anglo-Indian community by Frank Anthony, President, All India Anglo-Indian Association	B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), <i>Framing of India's Constitution</i> , Vol. II, pp. 343-7	682
20.	1&2.5.1947	Discussion on the Interim Report of the Committee on Fundamental Rights	Extracts from Proceedings of the Constituent Assembly	<i>Constituent Assembly Debates</i> , Vol. III, pp. 485-522	685
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22.	2.5.1947	Discussion on Issues of Citizenship and Language	Extracts from the Proceedings of the Constituent Assembly	<i>Constituent Assembly Debates</i> , Vol. III, pp. 526-35	714

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24.	7.5.1947	No Interference in Socio-religious Institutions of Jains	Extracts from the Memorandum to the Minorities Sub-committee by the Jain Swetambar Conference	B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), <i>Framing of India's Constitution</i> , Vol. II, pp. 383-4	722

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10.	8.4.1947	Nehru on Gandhi's Offer to Jinnah and Other Political Solutions	Extract from Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Jawaharlal Nehru	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML	733
11.	11.4.1947	Gandhi Withdraws His Plan	Letter from M.K. Gandhi to Louis Mountbatten	CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 254-5	733
12.	12.4.1947	Gandhi and Mountbatten's Discussions on Political Situation	Note of Louis Mountbatten's Interview with M.K. Gandhi	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 192, NMML	734
13.	1.5.1947	Patel Demands Resignation of League Members	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten	SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 146-7	736

Chapter 15. Exploring Political Alternatives

1.	25.3.1947	Pessimism about India's Future	Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and John Matthai	Mountbatten Papers, File No.191, NMML	737
2.	27.3.1947	Azad Blames Congress for Rejection of Cabinet Mission Plan	Extract from the Record of Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Maulana Azad	Mountbatten Papers, File No.191, NMML	737
3.	27.3.1947	Naga Demand for Self-determination	Letter from the Naga National Council to Lord Simon, London	Home Poll (I), File No. 61/1947, NAI	738
4.	28.3.1947	'India's Fateful Hour'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	739
5.	28.3.1947	British Declaration Indicates No Change of Attitude	Extract from a Report of J.P. Narayan's Speech at East India Railwaymen's Annual Conference	<i>National Herald</i>	740
6.	28.3.1947	'Jinnah Calls for Truce'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	741
7.	29.3.1947	'Gandhiji's Faith in British Pledge'	Extract from a Report	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	742
8.	31.3.1947	Alternative to Cabinet Mission Plan	Extracts from Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the Viceroy's Staff	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 200A, NMML	743

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9.	2.4.1947	President of Hindu Mahasabha and Master Tara Singh Represent Hindus	Telegram from V.D. Savarkar to Louis Mountbatten	S.S. Savarkar and G.M. Joshi (Eds), <i>Historic Statements—V.D. Savarkar</i> , p. 193	744
10.	3.4.1947	Questions Posed to Jinnah on Pakistan	Extracts from Minutes of Viceroy's Seventh Staff Meeting	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 200A, NMML	745
11.	3.4.1947	Muslim State Preferable to Working with Congress	Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Liaquat Ali Khan	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML	746
12.	4.4.1947	Any Idea of Division Unacceptable	Letter from Chowdhry Kishenlal Lamror, General Secretary, All India Jat Mahasabha, Ajmer, to J.B. Kripalani	AICC Papers, File No. CL-3 (Part I)/1947, NMML	747
13.	4.4.1947	'Sardar Patel's Rejoinder to Jinnah—Truce Possible by Giving Up Use of Sword'	Extracts from a Report	<i>Bombay Chronicle</i>	748
14.	5–6.4.1947	'A Surgical Operation' of India Is the Only Solution	Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and M.A. Jinnah	Mountbatten Papers, File No.191, NMML	748
15.	10.4.1947	Congress May Agree to Partition if It Precludes Civil War	Extracts from an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Rajendra Prasad	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML	749
16.	10.4.1947	Socialists for Unity of Country and Provinces	Extracts from a Press Interview by Jayaprakash Narayan	Bimal Prasad (Ed.), <i>Jayaprakash Narayan: Selected Works</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 131–2	750
17.	10.4.1947	Mountbatten and Jinnah Debate Viability of Pakistan	Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and M.A. Jinnah	Mountbatten Papers, File No.191, NMML	751
18.	11.4.1947	Mountbatten Realizes United India Impractical	Minutes of the Viceroy's Thirteenth Staff Meeting	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 200B, NMML	753

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45.	8.5.1947	Partition of Punjab and Bengal Is 'Wrong in Every Case'	Letter from M.K. Gandhi to Louis Mountbatten	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 434-7	783
46.	10.5.1947	Nehru's Apprehensions regarding the New Proposals for Transfer of Power	Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten	IOR, R/3/1/151, Acc. No. 3819, NAI	785
47.	10.5.1947	V.P. Menon's Scheme for Transfer of Power	Extract from Minutes of Viceroy's Eleventh Miscellaneous Meeting	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 196A, NMML	785
48.	10.5.1947	Discussion about Transfer of Power in Simla	Extract from a Letter from V.P. Menon to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 111-18	789

Chapter 16. Making of the 3 June Plan

1.	10.5.1947	'Sardar's Solution for Political Impasse'	Extract from a Report	<i>Bombay Chronicle</i>	792
2.	11.5.1947	Nehru Fears the 'Throwing Overboard of the Basic All-India Union'	A Note by Jawaharlal Nehru on the Draft Proposals	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, pp. 131-3	793
3.	11.5.1947	'Speed Is the Essence of the Contract': Mountbatten's Plan	Telegram from Louis Mountbatten to H.L. Ismay	IOR, R/3/1/153, Acc. No. 3467, NAI	797
4.	11.5.1947	'League Will Resist Transfer of Power to Centre'	Extract from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	799
5.	11.5.1947	Jinnah Rejects Patel's Proposal	Statement by M.A. Jinnah	IOR, R/3/1/153, Acc. No. 3467, NAI	799
6.	13.5.1947	Congress President Represents Congress	Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. X, p. 800	801
7.	14.5.1947	Nehru Explains Reluctant Acceptance of Partition	Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Asaf Ali	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, pp. 148-50	802
8.	c. Second half of May 1947	Report on Bihar Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bihar for the First Half of May 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI	803
9.	16.5.1947	Nehru Suggests Changes in the Draft Plan	Note by Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten	IOR, R/3/1/150, Acc. No. 3465, NAI	803

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10.	16.5.1947	Position of Assam in the Negotiations for Transfer of Power	Letter from Louis Mountbatten to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. IV, p. 35	805
11.	17.5.1947	'Announcement of HMG's Plan on May 17'	Extract from a Report	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	806
12.	17.5.1947	Nehru Comments on the Revised Draft Announcement	Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten	IOR, R/3/1/150, Acc No. 3465, NAI	807
13.	17.5.1947	Interim Government to Continue as Before	Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to V.K. Krishna Menon	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, pp. 165-8	810
14.	17.5.1947	Jinnah Comments on the Draft Announcement	Viceroy's Conference Paper No. 49	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 208, NMML	811
15.	19.5.1947	Acharya Narendra Deva Opposes Partition	Extract from a Press Interview Reported in <i>National Herald</i>	Hari Dev Sharma (Ed.), <i>Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Deva</i> , Vol. II, p. 176	815
16.	20.5.1947	Questions about the Transfer of Power	Extract from a Letter from Doon Campbell to K.H. Khurshid	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 806-7	815
17.	20.5.1947	Discussion in London on Issues Related to Transfer of Power	Extract from the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet India and Burma Committee in London	<i>T.O.P.</i> , Vol. X, pp. 916-22.	816
18.	21.5.1947	Jinnah on the Revised Draft Announcement	Letter from M.A. Jinnah to Eric Mievile	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 833-6	818
19.	21.5.1947	Partition of India Implies Partition of Punjab	Telegram from Eric Mievile to Louis Mountbatten	IOR, R/3/1/150, Acc. No. 3465, NAI	819
20.	21.5.1947	Pakistan as Jinnah Saw It	Jinnah's Reply to Questionnaire from Doon Campbell, Reuter's Correspondent	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 842-5	820
21.	22.5.1947	Muslim League's Demand for a Corridor Not Genuine	Extract from a Letter from Govind Ballabh Pant to Vallabhbhai Patel	B.R. Nanda (Ed.), <i>Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant</i> , Vol. XI, pp. 145-6	823

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22.	22.5.1947	Partition a Final Decision	Extract from Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet India and Burma Committee	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. X, pp. 954–5	823
23.	22.5.1947	Need for Immediate Transfer of Power	Extracts from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Agatha Harrison	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, pp. 336–9	824
24.	22.5.1947	Dominion Status for India	Record of Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Winston Churchill	Mountbatten Papers, File No.193, NMML	825
25.	23.5.1947	Division of India Inevitable	Letter from Nehru to Ashrafuddin Ahmad Chowdhry	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, pp.170–1	826
26.	23.5.1947	‘How Disaster in India Can Be Avoided’	Extracts from a Report	<i>The Statesman</i>	827
27.	24.5.1947	‘Corridor Demand Untenable: Rajen Babu’	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	827
28.	25.5.1947	Jinnah Rejects the Proposed Draft Announcement	Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Eric Mieville	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, pp. 175–8	828
29.	27.5.1947	‘Jinnah Cannot Be Taken Seriously’	Report	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	830
30.	27.5.1947	‘Britain Has No Right to Change Map of India’	Report	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	830
31.	27.5.1947	“‘Inshallah We Shall Have Corridor’: Nishtar’s Address at League Meeting in Muzaffarnagar’	Extract from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	831
32.	27.5.1947	‘Vivisection of India Impracticable’	Extract from a Report	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	832
33.	31.5.1947– 5.6.1947	Congress Deliberations on HMG’s Statement	Extracts from the Proceedings of the Congress Working Committee	AICC Papers, File No. G-43/1947, NMML	833
34.	31.5.1947	Tribal Jirgas in Baluchistan Should Be Consulted	Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten	IOR, R/3/1/155, Acc. No. 3469, NAI	835
35.	1.6.1947	Independence at the Cost of Unity Will Be Dark	M.K. Gandhi’s Conversation with Manu Gandhi	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. LXXXVIII, pp. 50–2	836
36.	On or after 2.6.1947	Congress Accepts Division	A Letter from M.K. Gandhi	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. LXXXVIII, p. 63	837

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37.	2.6.1947	Reactions to HMG's Proposals	Letter from J.B. Kripalani to Louis Mountbatten	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 157, NMML	837
38.	2.6.1947	Gandhi's Reactions to His Majesty's Statement	M.K. Gandhi's Speech at the Meeting of the Congress Working Committee at New Delhi	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. LXXXVIII, p. 61	839
39.	2.6.1947	Sikh Sentiments Should Be Considered	Letter from Baldev Singh to Louis Mountbatten	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 157, NMML	840
40.	2.6.1947	'Gandhi's Latest on India's Unity Is Very Late—Pir Ilahi Bakhsh'	Extract from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	841

Chapter 17. Contending with Communalism

1.	24.3.1947	On Communal Violence in Punjab and NWFP	Extract from a Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to M.K. Gandhi	P.N. Chopra (Ed.), <i>Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel</i> , Vol. XII, pp. 17–18	843
2.	1.4.1947	Demand for Strict Government Action against Muslims	API Report of a Statement by L.B. Bhopatkar	Home Poll (I), File No. 33/11/47, NAI	843
3.	2.4.1947	'Vivisect Pakistan'	Statement by V.D. Savarkar	S.S. Savarkar and G.M. Joshi (Eds), <i>Historic Statements: V.D. Savarkar</i> , pp. 193–4	844
4.	8.4.1947	Appeal for Upholding Communal Peace	Extracts from Record of Interview between Louis Mountbatten and M.A. Jinnah	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML	844
5.	11.4.1947	Joint Plea for Communal Harmony	Note by Eric Mievill about His Interview with M.A. Jinnah	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. X, pp. 198–9	845
6.	13.4.1947	Statement against Communal Violence	Telegram from G.E.B. Abell to Hugh Dow	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 110, NMML.	846

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7.	14.4.1947	Massacre of Innocent People Must Stop	M.K. Gandhi's Talk with Members of the Muslim League	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. LXXXVII, p. 283	846
8.	14.4.1947	Gandhi, Jinnah, and Kripalani Must Sign the Appeal for Communal Peace	Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, pp. 331-3	846
9.	16.4.1947	'Gandhi and Jinnah Denounce Violence'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	848
10.	17.4.1947	'A Parsi Approach to Hindu-Muslim Compromise'	Letter from Jal K. Wadia to M.A. Jinnah	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 559-63	848
11.	20.4.1947	Follow Up of Gandhi-Jinnah Appeal	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 114A, NMML	851
12.	20.4.1947	'Communal Troubles Must Be Stopped at Once'	Extract from the Inaugural Address by Jawaharlal Nehru at UP Political Conference at Mau	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, pp. 333-5	852
13.	21.4.1947	Patel Comments on the Gandhi-Jinnah Appeal	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to M.K. Gandhi	P.N. Chopra (Ed.), <i>Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel</i> , Vol. XII, p. 64.	853
14.	23.4.1947	'No Solution on Basis of Pakistan'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	854
15.	23.4.1947	'Momin Conference President Suspended: Irresponsible Statement'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	854
16.	30.4.1947	Criticism of Congress Policy towards the League	Extracts from a Letter from Ashrafuddin Ahmad Chowdhary to Vallabhbhai Patel	AICC Papers, File No. CL-8/1946, NMML	855
17.	April 1947	Communal Propaganda: The Scheme of Pakistan	Extract from Correspondence in Intelligence Bureau, Home Department	Home Poll (I), File No. 37/2/47, NAI	856
18.	3.5.1947	Communal Outlook of Congress Ministry in Bombay Denied	Extract from an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and B.G. Kher	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 193, NMML.	864

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19.	11.5.1947	'League Leader in No Reasonable Frame of Mind: Mohan Lal Saxena's View'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	865
20.	13.5.1947	Congress is Non-violent and Non-communal	Letter from J.B. Kripalani to Ashrafuddin Ahmad Chowdhry	AICC Papers, File No. CL-8/1946, NMML	866
21.	15.5.1947	Need to Strengthen Police Force	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Prime Ministers of Congress-administered Provinces	P.N. Chopra (Ed.), <i>Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel</i> , Vol. XII, p. 95	868
22.	23.5.1947	'Arms Check-up in Cawnpore'	Report	<i>Statesman</i>	868
23.	25.5.1947	'Gandhiji's Advice to Sindh Hindus'	Extract from a Report	<i>Harijan</i>	869
24.	30.5.1947	Anticipation of Communal Trouble in Assam	Telegram from Akbar Hydari to Jawaharlal Nehru	Home Poll (I), File No. 5/56/47, NAI	869
25	31.5.1947	Demand for United India with a Strong Central Government	Statement by V.G. Deshpande, President, All India Hindu Students Federation	AIHM Papers, File No. C-165, NMML	870
26.	1.6.1947	Patel Objects to Attack on the Government of Bihar	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 389-90	871

Chapter 18. Communalism: Provinces

A. Bengal

1.	28.3.1947	Worsening Communal Violence in Calcutta	Telegram from N.C. Chatterjee to S.P. Mookerjee	AIHM Papers, File No. C-136, NMML	872
2.	1.4.1947	'Military Open Fire on Calcutta Rioters'	Extract from a report	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	872
3.	3.4.1947	Report on Bengal Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bengal for Second Half of March 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI	873
4.	6.4.1947	Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha Conference at Tarakeshwar	Draft Resolution by Ashutosh Lahiry	AIHM Papers, File No. P-107, NMML.	875

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5.	9.4.1947	'Migrate From Noakhali: Gandhi's Advice to Hindus'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	877
6.	11.4.1947	'Gandhi's Telegrams on Noakhali Responsible for Fresh Troubles in Calcutta: Suhrawardy'	Extract from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	877
7.	12.4.1947	Adjust Bengal Assembly Dates according to the Constituent Assembly Session	Telegram from Kiran Shankar Roy to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, pp. 55–6	878
8.	17.4.1947	Report on Bengal Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bengal for the First Half of April 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI	878
9.	19.4.1947	Congress Members Should Resign from Bengal Provincial Legislatures	Letter from Benod Behari Sen to the Secretary, All India Congress Parliamentary Board	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, p. 57	880
10.	21.4.1947	Demands for the Removal of Punjabi Muslim Policemen	Letter from Asstt. Secretary, Noakhali Rescue, Relief and Rehabilitation Committee to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, pp. 58–9	881
11.	23.4.1947	Reveal Plan of Action	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Benod Behari Sen	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, p. 58	882
12.	24.4.1947	'Hindu Sabha Hartal Has No Justification'	Extracts from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	882
13.	28.4.1947	Grant of Additional Legal Powers to the Armed Forces	Letter from Additional Secretary, Government of Bengal, Home Department, to Secretary, Government of India, Defence Department (Army Branch)	Home Poll., File No. 184/47, West Bengal State Archives	883
14.	28.4.1947	Report on the Indian Press	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on the Press for the Second Half of April 1947	Home Poll, File No. 38/1947, West Bengal State Archives	884

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16.	1.5.1947	'Realization of Collective Fines'	Extract from a Report from <i>Morning News</i>	Home Poll, File No. 215/47, West Bengal State Archives	886
17.	3.5.1947	Report on Bengal Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bengal for the Second Half of April 1947	Home Poll (I), File No.18/4/47, NAI	886
18.	4.5.1947	No Law and Order in Calcutta	Letter from M.N. Saha to Rajendra Prasad	R.P. Papers, F. No. 6-I/45-6-7, NAI	889
19.	7.5.1947	Enquiries into Noakhali Riots	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten	P.N. Chopra (Ed.), <i>The Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel</i> , Vol. XII, pp. 78-9	891
20.	7.5.1947	Political Manoeuvrings Affecting Bengal Police Force	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, pp. 72-4	891
21.	10.5.1947	Call for Peaceful Relations between Hindus and Muslims	Gandhi's Speech at a Prayer Meeting at Sodepur	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 446-7	892
22.	11.5.1947	Demand for Removal of Bengal Ministry	Extract from a Letter from K.C. Neogy to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 37-9	893
23.	17.5.1947	Report on Bengal Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bengal for the First Half of May 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI	894
24.	23.5.1947	Troops Needed for Safeguarding Calcutta	Letter from S.P. Jain to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, pp. 60-1	895
25.	1.6.1947	Measures Proposed to Prevent Trouble in Calcutta	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to S.P. Jain	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, pp. 61-2	896

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26.	4.6.1947	Report on Bengal Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bengal for the Second Half of May 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI	896
27.	17.6.1947	Alternate Path to Hindu-Muslim Unity	Letter from Abhay Charan De to J.B. Kripalani, President, AICC	AICC Papers, File No. C-8/1946, NMML	898
B. Bihar					
1.	23.3.1947	Hindus Should Be Self-righteous	Extracts from M.K. Gandhi's Bihar Tour Diary	<i>Harijan</i>	900
2.	25.3.1947	Reporting Communal and Political Situation in Bihar	Extract from a Letter from Hugh Dow to Louis Mountbatten	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. X, pp. 18-19	902
3.	30.3.1947	Gandhi Calls for Donations for Muslim Victims	Extracts from M.K. Gandhi's Bihar Tour Diary	<i>Harijan</i>	903
4.	6.4.1947	Resettle Muslim and Hindu Victims	Extracts from M.K. Gandhi's Bihar Tour Diary	<i>Harijan</i>	906
5.	10.4.1947	'Bihar Riots: 16,032 Persons Accused So Far'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	908
6.	13.4.1947	Hindus Continue Communal Fervour	Extracts from M.K. Gandhi's Bihar Tour Diary	<i>Harijan</i>	908
7.	16.4.1947	'Bihar Tragedy: Ministry Decides not to Appoint Enquiry Committee'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	910
8.	17.4.1947	One's Sin Is Everyone's Sin	M.K. Gandhi's Talk with the Representatives of Jamiat-ul-Ulema at Patna	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 296-7	910
9.	29.4.1947	Examples of Hindu Support to Muslim Refugees	M.K. Gandhi's Speech at a Prayer Meeting	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 388-90	911
10.	29.4.1947	Protection for Every Citizen	Extract from a Letter from M.K. Gandhi to Syed Abdul Aziz	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. LXXXVII, p. 381	912
11.	29.4.1947	Reports on Communal Situation in Bihar	Extract from a Letter from Hugh Dow to Louis Mountbatten	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 28, NMML	912

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13.	4.5.1947	'Transfer of Power Should Come with Peace'	Extracts from M.K. Gandhi's Bihar Tour Diary	<i>Harijan</i>	913
14.	6.5.1947	'Separate Ministries for Hindu and Non-Hindu Bihar Demanded'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	915
15.	7.5.1947	'No Communal Bitterness in Bihar—Success of Gandhiji's Mission'	Extracts from a Report	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	916
16.	8.5.1947	Patel Opposes Enquiry Commission into Riots	Extract from a Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 28, NMML	917
17.	8.5.1947	'League Leaders Should Have Gone to Noakhali to Make Muslims Repent—Dr Syed Mahmud's Suggestion'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	917
18.	11.5.1947	Cow-protection and Role of Hindus and Muslims	Extracts from M.K. Gandhi's Bihar Tour Diary for April 1947	<i>Harijan</i>	918
19.	19.5.1947	Call for Division of Bihar	Extracts from a Letter from Mahboob Ahmad Warsi to M.A. Jinnah	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 801–05	919
20.	29.5.1947	'Stocktaking in Bihar'	Extracts from an Editorial	<i>Dawn</i>	920
21.	1.6.1947	Bihari Hindus Should Seek Atonement	Extracts from M.K. Gandhi's Bihar Tour Diary	<i>Harijan</i>	922
22.	3.6.1947	'Chargesheet against Bihar Government II'	Extracts from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	924
23.	11.6.1947	Savarkar Congratulates Bihar Hindus	Statement by V.D. Savarkar	S.S. Savarkar and G.M. Joshi (Eds), <i>Historic Statements</i> , V.D. Savarkar, pp. 199–201	925

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C. Bombay					
1.	3.4.1947	Report from Bombay Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bombay for Second Half of March 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.	926
2.	18.6.1947	Report from Bombay Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bombay for First Half of June 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/6/47, NAI	927
D. Central Provinces and Berar					
1.	Undated [March 1947]	Crimes Committed by Hindus of Jubbulpore Town	Extracts from a Letter from M.M. Burhanul Haq to R.S. Shukla	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I. pp. 469-70	928
2.	6.5.1947	Report from CP and Berar	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on CP and Berar for Second Half of April 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.	929
E. Delhi					
1.	24.3.1947	Communal Trouble in Delhi	Letter from W. Christie to A.E. Porter	Home Poll (I), File No. 5/7/47, NAI	930
2.	5.4.1947	Report from Delhi	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Delhi for the Second Half of March 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI	931
3.	19.4.1947	Report from Delhi	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Delhi for the First Half of April 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.	931
4.	25.4.1947	Communal Trouble in Delhi	Letter from W. Christie to A.E. Porter	Home Poll (I), File. No. 5/7/47, NAI.	932
5.	25.4.1947	Measures to Check Communal Rioting	Resolution Passed by the Central Government Muslim Employees' Association	Home Poll (I), File No. 5/7/47, NAI	933
6.	27.4.1947	Culprits Must Be Apprehended	Secretary, Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Delhi, to the Home Member Forwarding a Copy of a Resolution Passed by the Sikhs of Delhi	Home Poll (I), File No. 5/7/47, NAI	934

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7.	28.4.1947	Political Nature of the Communal Disturbances	Letter from W. Christie to A.E. Porter	Home Poll (I), File No. 5/7/47, NAI	935
8.	7.5.1947	'Malik's Peace Appeal to Hindu & Sikh Leaders'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	936
9.	9.5.1947	Representation Protesting against the Highhandedness of Delhi Police	Letter from Secretary, Hindu Sahayata Samiti, to the Home Member	Home Poll (I), File No. 5/7/47, NAI	937
10.	19.5.1947	Report from Delhi	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Delhi for the First Half of May 1947	Home Poll (I), File No.18/5/47, NAI	938
11.	5.5.1947	Measures to Deal with Communal Disturbances in Delhi	Letter from R.N. Banerjee to W. Christie	Home Poll (I), File No. 5/58/47, NAI	939
F. NWFP					
1.	16.4.1947	Political and Communal Situation in the Frontier	Minutes of Viceroy's Third Miscellaneous Meeting	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 196A, NMML	940
2.	17.4.1947	'Half of the City of Dera Ismail Burnt'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	945
3.	18.4.1947	Report from NWFP	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on North West Frontier Province for the First Half of April 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI	945
4.	20.4.1947	'Bannu City Sniped from Outside'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	946
5.	21.4.1947	'Dera Ismail Khan Quiet—Villages in distress'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	947
6.	22.4.1947	Tribal Jirga Held at Mirali	Report of the Intelligence Bureau, H.D.	External Affairs Deptt, File No. 9(71) NWA/47, NAI	947
7.	25 April 1947	Communal Rioting in Rawalpindi	Note by Edwina Mountbatten to Louis Mountbatten	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 84A, NMML	948
8.	25.4.1947	League Must Withdraw Their Policy of Violence	Extract from the Viceroy's Eighth Miscellaneous Meeting	Mountbatten Papers, File 96A, NMML	948

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9.	26.4.1947	Muslim League Plans to Carry Out a Demonstration	Extracts from a Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 249–52	949
10.	26.4.1947	Communal Situation in NWFP	Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, pp. 321–3	951
11.	1.5.1947	Deliberate Policy of Violence Increases Communal Feeling	Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, pp. 324–6	952
12.	2.5.1947	Report from NWFP	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on NWFP for the Second Half of April 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI	953
13.	1.6.1947	Frontier Minority Faces Communal Insanity	Letter from Prem Das to J.B. Kripalani	AICC Papers, File No. G-14/1946–47, NMML	955
14.	10.6.1947	‘Islam Never Preached Killing of Helpless and Slaughter of Women and Children’	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	955
15.	20.6.1947	Congress Has Failed to Protect Hindus and Sikhs	Press Statement by All-India Hindu Mahasabha and Central Hindu–Sikh Minority Protection Board	AIHM Papers, File No. C–165, NMML	956
G. Punjab					
1.	23–26.3.1947	Mahasabha Leaders Visit Riot-affected Areas	Extract from a Report by Hindu Mahasabha Leaders	AIHM Papers, File No. C-154, NMML	957
2.	24.3.1947	Bhopatkar Calls for United Hindu–Sikh Front	Press Statement by L.B. Bhopatkar, President, All-India Hindu Mahasabha	AIHM Papers, File No. C-165, NMML	959
3.	25.3.1947	Patel’s Reply to Narang	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Gokul Chand Narang	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, pp. 284–6	961
4.	26.3.1947	PPCC Resolution on Communal Outbreak in Punjab	Resolution Passed by Punjab Provincial Congress Committee	AICC Papers, File No. G-10/1947, NMML	962
5.	26.3.1947	‘Hindus and Sikhs Acknowledge Muslim Chivalry’	Extract from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	964

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6.	30.3.1947	'Let Mamdot Form Ministry or Hold Fresh Elections: Ghazanfar Ali Asks Punjab Governor to End Sec. 93 Rule'	Extract from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	965
7.	31.3.1947	'Sacred Blood of Our Martyrs'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	966
8.	31.3.1947	'Perpetrators of Crime Still at Large: Free Elections Impossible'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	967
9.	3.4.1947	Formation of Punjab Ministry: Factions within the League	Letter from M.A. Jinnah to Firoz Khan Noon	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 490-1	968
10.	4.4.1947	Rescue Abducted Women Immediately	Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Evan Jenkins	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II. pp. 303-4	969
11.	7.4.1947	Report from Punjab Province	Extract from Fortnightly Report on Punjab for Second Half of March 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI	970
12.	7.4.1947	Increasing Communal Tensions	Letter from M.K. Gandhi to Louis Mountbatten	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. X, p. 146	971
13.	10.4.1947	Communal Attitude of Sikh Leaders	Letter from S.E. Abbott to George Abell Forwarding a Letter by Baldev Singh to the Punjab Governor	Lionel Carter (Ed.), <i>Punjab Politics</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 124-6	971
14.	10.4.1947	'Riot-stricken Hindus and Sikhs Must Not Migrate—Sardar Swarn Singh and Lehna Singh's Appeals'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	973
15.	12.4.1947	'Muslims Engaged in Life and Death Struggle: Ghazanfar's Advice to Students'	Extract from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	974
16.	12.4.1947	Congressmen Not to Be Associated with Communal Relief Organizations	Letter from Sadiq Ali to the General Secretary, District Congress Committee, Gurgaon	AICC Papers, File No. G-8 (I)/1947, NMML	976
17.	15.4.1947	Governor of Punjab Partisan to Hindu-Sikh Front	Extract of a Letter from Liaquat Ali Khan to Louis Mountbatten	IOR, R/3/1/90, Acc. No. 3415, NAI	977

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18.	16.4.1947	Jenkins Denies Charges Laid upon Him by Liaquat Ali	Extract from a Note by Evan Jenkins Commenting on a Letter by Liaquat Ali Khan to Louis Mountbatten	IOR, R/3/190, Acc. No. 3415, NAI	979
19.	17.4.1947	'Communal Harmony behind Swords'	Extract from a Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	980
20.	19.4.1947	Report from Punjab Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Punjab for the First Half of April 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI	981
21.	19.4.1947	'Noble Example of Communal Harmony'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	983
22.	20.4.1947	Maharaja of Patiala Portends Civil War	Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Maharaja of Patiala	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 192, NMML	984
23.	21.4.1947	'Communal Activities of the Muslim League Necessitate Partition'	Letter from Bhimsen Sachar to Jawaharlal Nehru Enclosing a Statement Jointly Issued by Him and Sardar Swaran Singh	AICC Papers, File No. G-34/1947, NMML	985
24.	23.4.1947	League's Claim to the Punjab Ministry	Extract from a Letter from Iftikar Husain Khan of Mamdot to Evan Jenkins	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 624-5	987
25.	24.4.1947	Governor Doubts League Claims of Majority in the Legislative Assembly	Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Louis Mountbatten	IOR, R/3/1/177, Acc. No. 3478, NAI	987
26.	28.4.1947	Communal Ministry Cannot Govern Punjab	Extract from a Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Louis Mountbatten	IOR, R/3/1/177, Acc. No. 3478, NAI	988
27.	29.4.1947 and 2.5.1947	Sikhs Bearing Kirpans Threat to Peace	Notes from the Home Department	Home Poll (I), File No. 5/7/47, NMML	989
28.	30.4.1947	Report on Communal Rioting in Punjab	Letter from Punjab Provincial Congress Committee to the General Secretary, AICC	AICC Papers, File No. G-10/1947, NMML	990

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29.	4.5.1947	Hindu-Sikh Stakes Higher in Gurdaspur	Text of a Telegram to J.B. Kripalani Sent by Different Organizations of Punjab	AICC Papers, File No. G-34/1947, NMML	994
30.	5.5.1947	Partition No Solution	Report on the Communal Rioting in Punjab by Chhabil Das	B.S. Moonje Papers, Subject File No. 58, NMML	994
31.	7.5.1947	Report from Punjab Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Punjab for the Second Half of April 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI	997
32.	7.5.1947	Apprehensions about a Communal Ministry in Punjab	Letter from Evan Jenkins to Iftikar Husain Khan of Mamdot	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. X, pp. 646-8	999
33.	12.5.1947	'Khizr Pledges Full Support to League'	Extract from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1000
34.	13.5.1947	Sikhs Special Targets in Communal Violence	Letter from S.E. Abbott to R.V. Brockman Forwarding a Statement Issued by Master Tara Singh	Lionel Carter (Ed.), <i>Punjab Politics</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 181-4	1001
35.	13.5.1947	Tara Singh Rejects the Gandhi-Jinnah Peace Appeal	Extract from a Letter from Tara Singh to S.E. Abbott	Lionel Carter (Ed.), <i>Punjab Politics</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 194-5	1003
36.	14.5.1947	Problems regarding the Formation of a League Ministry in Punjab	Extract from a Letter from Evan Jenkins to Louis Mountbatten	Lionel Carter (Ed.), <i>Punjab Politics</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 184-92	1003
37.	18.5.1947	'Refugees' Lives Broken; Military Terror for All'	Extracts from a Report	<i>People's Age</i>	1007
38.	18.5.1947	Appeal to Impose Martial Law on Lahore	Letter from G.C. Narang and Bhim Sen Sachar to Evan Jenkins	IOR, R/3/1/176, Acc. No. 3477, NAI	1009
39.	19.5.1947	No Case for Martial Law in Lahore	Letter from Evan Jenkins to G.C. Narang	IOR, R/3/1/176, Acc. No. 3477, NAI	1010

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40.	21.5.1947	Sikhs Gear Up for Communal Attacks on Muslims	Letter from S.E. Abbott to R.V. Brockman Forwarding an Intelligence Report on the Activities of Sikhs	IOR, R/3/1/145, Acc. No. 3460, NAI	1011
41.	21.5.1947	Impose Martial Law in Punjab	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to John Colville	SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 17-18	1011
42.	22.5.1947	Report from Punjab Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Punjab for the First Half of May 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI	1012
43.	23.5.1947	Uncontrollable Rioting in Lahore: Call for Effective Use of Army	Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to John Colville	IOR, R/3/1/90, Acc. No. 3415, NAI	1015
44.	24.5.1947	'Fight Back Goondaism': Patel's Advice to Punjabis	Extract from a Report	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	1016
45.	26.5.1947	Muslims and Sikhs Blame Each Other for Violence and Arson	Letter from S.E. Abbott to R.V. Brockman Forwarding Notes by Evan Jenkins on His Interviews with Liaquat Ali Khan and Baldev Singh	IOR, R/3/1/90, Acc. No. 3415, NAI	1017
46.	28.5.1947	Press and Prominent Leaders Should Spread Message of Peace	Appeal by All Parties Peace Committee, Rawalpindi	S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 98, Installment II to IV, NMML	1020
47.	29.5.1947	Troops Helping Hindus against Muslims	Letter from Ghazanfar Ali Khan to John Colville	IOR, R/3/1/90, Acc. No. 3415, NAI	1021
48.	30.5.1947	Illegal Detenus under District Commissioner's Orders	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten Forwarding His Letter to Evan Jenkins	IOR, R/3/1/90, Acc. No. 3415, NAI	1022
49.	31.5.1947	Premeditated and Organized Attacks in Gurgaon	Letter from Liaquat Ali Khan to Louis Mountbatten	IOR, R/3/1/90, Acc. No. 3415, NAI	1024
50.	7.6.1947	Report from Punjab Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Punjab for the Second Half of May 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI	1025

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51.	15.6.1947	Casualties in Punjab	Telegram from S.E. Abbott to G.E.B. Abell	Lionel Carter (Ed.), <i>Punjab Politics</i> , Vol. V, p. 79	1027
52.	17.6.1947	Appalling Communal Situation in Gurgaon	Extract from a Letter from Mian Mumtaz Mohammad Daulatana to Liaquat Ali Khan	IOR, R/3/1/90, Acc. No. 3415, NAI	1027
53.	22.6.1947	Tragedies of Punjab	Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten	IOR, R/3/1/91, Acc. No. 3416, NAI	1029
H. Sind					
1.	15.4.1947	Governor Accused of Partiality	Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Francis Mudie	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 192, NMML	1031
2.	22.4.1947	Mudie Presents His Case against Congress Claim	Letter from Francis Mudie to Louis Mountbatten	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 138, NMML	1032
3.	23.4.1947	Objectionable Activities of League Leaders	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, pp. 309–10	1033
4.	7.5.1947	Action Taken against League Leaders	Letter from Louis Mountbatten to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, pp. 311–12	1035
5.	10.5.1947	Communal Speeches Made at Sukkur Muslim League Conference	Letter from Parasram V. Tahilramani to Chief Secretary, Government of Sind	Home Poll (I), File No. 57/20/47, NAI	1036
6.	12.5.1947	Role of Congressmen in Local Politics of Sind	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Jethmal Parsram	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, p. 314	1037
7.	15.5.1947	Hindu Minority in Sind	Letter from R.K. Sidhwa to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, pp. 316–17	1037
8.	15.5.1947	Right of Gurkhas to Carry Khukries	Extract from a Letter from Nihchaldas C. Vazirani to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, p. 334	1038
9.	19.5.1947	Public Speeches by League Leaders Questioned	Note by R.N. Banerjee	Home Poll (I), File No. 57/20/47, NAI	1038

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10.	21.5.1947	Khukris Not of Religious Significance	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Nihchaldas C. Vazirani	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, pp. 318–19	1039
11.	23.5.1947	Hindu Minorities Must Not Migrate	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to R.K. Sidhwa	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, p. 333	1039
12.	1.6.1947	Demand for Separation of Hindu Majority Districts in Sind	Telegram from V.D. Savarkar to President, Sind Provincial Sabha, and the Chairman of Hindu and Minority Conference	S.S. Savarkar and G.M. Joshi (Eds), <i>Historic Statements: V.D. Savarkar</i> , p. 198	1040

I. United Provinces

1.	8.4.1947	Report from UP	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on UP for Second Half of March 1947	Home Poll(I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI	1040
2.	23.4.1947	Report from UP	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on UP for First Half of April 1947	Home Poll(I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.	1041
3.	3.5.1947	Communal Situation Worsening in UP	Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and G.B. Pant	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. X, pp. 590–1	1041
4.	6.5.1947	Peace Committees on Either Side Must Act Responsibly	G.B. Pant's Address to Members of Peace Committees at Bareilly	B.R. Nanda (Ed.), <i>Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant</i> , Vol. XI, pp. 135–6	1042
5.	28.5.1947	Organization of Home Guards and Assistance to Refugees	Extracts from a Letter from G.B. Pant to Vallabhbhai Patel	B.R. Nanda (Ed.), <i>Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant</i> , Vol. XI, pp. 147–9	1043
6.	29.5.1947	'Proportion of Hindus and Muslims in Services'	Extract from G.B. Pant's Speech in UP Legislative Council	B.R. Nanda (Ed.), <i>Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant</i> , Vol. XI, pp. 149–54	1044

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Chapter 19. Muslim League Civil Disobedience Movements in Assam and NWFP					
A. Assam					
1.	25.5.1947	'11 Muslim Immigrants Killed in Assam Firing: Civil Disobedience Movement Takes a Serious Turn'	Extract from a Report from <i>PakistanTimes</i>	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part II, pp. 454-5.	1046
2.	29.3.1947	Religious Distribution of Population and Grouping in Assam	Extract from a letter from V.P. Menon to G.E.B. Abell	IOR, R/3/1/130, Acc. No. 3448, NAI	1047
3.	1.4.1947	'Assam Govt Can't Submit to Threats: <i>Bardoloi Exposes League Plans for "Invasion"</i>	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1047
4.	2.4.1947	'Bardoloi Ministry Must Go'	Editorial	<i>Dawn</i>	1048
5.	8.4.1947	'Censorship of Eviction News Imposed by Bardoloi Ministry'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1049
6.	9.4.1947	Provision of Military Aid for Assam	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Baldev Singh	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, p. 12	1050
7.	11.4.1947	Patel Approves of Bardoloi's Immigration Policy	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Gopinath Bardoloi	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, p. 13	1051
8.	11.4.1947	'Saadulla in Talks with Bardoloi'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1051
9.	13.4.1947	Preparations for Direct Action against Assam Government	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, pp. 18-21	1052
10.	15.4.1947	Posting of Armed Forces in Assam	Letter from Gopinath Bardoloi to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, pp. 14-16	1054
11.	16.4.47	'Muslim Students behind Assam Campaign'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1055
12.	16.4.1947	Political Situation in Assam	Letter from Syed M. Saadullah to M.A. Jinnah	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 555-8	1056
13.	17.4.1947	'Assam Govt's Eviction Policy Condemned'	Extract from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1058

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14.	22.4.1947	Case of Mizo People for Self-determination	Extract from a Memorandum Prepared by the Mizo Union	S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 130, Installment II to IV, NMML	1059
15.	23.4.47	'Bardoloi Greeted with Black Flags in Silchar'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1062
16.	26.4.47	Savarkar's Stand on the Assam Situation	Telegram from V.D. Sarvarkar to Gopinath Bardoloi	S.P. Mookerjee Papers, File No. 95, Part I, Installment II to IV, NMML	1063
17.	27.4.1947	Settlement of Immigrants in Tribal Areas of Assam	Letter from Gopinath Bardoloi to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, pp. 16-18	1063
18.	28.4.1947	'Assam League Backs Out'	Report	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	1065
19.	28.4.1947	Note on Muslim Majority Areas in Assam	Letter from Abdul Matin Chaudhury to K.H. Khurshid	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 617-21	1065
20.	29.4.47	'Assam Government Not in Mood to Settle with League'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1069
21.	1.5.47	Impact of Bengal Partition on Assam	Extract from Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Gopinath Bardoloi	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 18, NMML	1070
22.	3.5.1947	Report from Assam Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Assam for the Second half of April 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI	1071
23.	3.5.1947	'Assam Muslim Students Protest against Government Repression: May 7 to Be Observed as Martyrs' Day'	Extract from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1072
24.	24.5.1947	Nehru Comments on Assam Situation and Jinnah's Attitude	Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Akbar Hydari	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, pp. 172-3	1073
B. NWFP					
1.	25.3.1947	"'You Must Be Prepared to Lay Down Your Life to Defend the Weak"—Qazi Attaullah's Appeal to Red Shirts'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1074

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2.	26.3.1947	Nehru Demands Caroe's Resignation	Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Olaf Caroe	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, pp. 317-18	1075
3.	27.3.1947	'Frontier League Movement Enters Second Month: Tribute to Gallant Muslim Masses'	Report from <i>Pakistan Times</i>	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part II, pp. 354-5	1076
4.	1.4.1947	'Frontier Repression'	Editorial from <i>Pakistan Times</i>	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I. Part II, pp. 366-7	1077
5.	2.4.1947	'Lahore Muslim Women Take Part in Frontier Movement'	Report from <i>Pakistan Times</i>	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part II, p. 371	1078
6.	3.4.1947	'Political Prisoners in Kohat Break Doors of Barracks'	Report from <i>Pakistan Times</i>	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part II, p. 372	1078
7.	4.4.1947	Governor Considered Partial to the League	Extract from the Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten, M.K. Gandhi and Abdul Ghaffar Khan	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML.	1078
8.	5.4.1947	'Kohat Muslim Women Demand Fresh Elections'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1079
9.	11.4.1947	Chief Secretary, NWFP Government, Gives His Assessment of the Political Situation	Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Lt Col D. de la Fargue	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML	1080
10.	11.4.1947	'Revulsion against League in NWFP'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1081
11.	12.4.1947	Situation of the NWFP Ministry	Extract from the Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Maulana Azad	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 192, NMML	1081
12.	12.4.1947	Pro-League Leanings of the NWFP Governor	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 256-60	1082
13.	14.4.1947	'Tribal Jirgas Resolve to Achieve Pakistan'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1086
14.	18.4.1947	Political Situation in the Frontier	Minutes of the Fourth Miscellaneous Meeting of the Viceroy	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 196A, NMML	1087

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15.	26.4.1947	'Frontier Referendum Imminent: Congress Ministry Will Have a Fall from Which It Will Never Rise'	Report from <i>Pakistan Times</i>	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part II, pp. 398-9	1091
16.	27.4.1947	'Frontier Ministry Will Never Submit to Unabashed Goondaism: Sardar Patel's Statement'	Extract from a Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1091
17.	29.4.1947	Viceroy's Impressions: Need for Fresh Elections in NWFP	Note by Louis Mountbatten	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 193, NMML	1092
18.	29.4.1947	Communal Undertones of the League Agitation	Record of Meeting between Louis Mountbatten and Representatives of the Hindu-Sikh Minorities Protection Board	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 96A, NMML	1093
19.	30.4.1947	'Heavy Losses to Hindus and Sikhs in the Disturbances in Frontier Province: Forcible Religious Conversion and Large Scale Arson.'	Extract from a Report	<i>Hindustan</i>	1096
20.	2.5.1947	Decisions regarding NWFP Elections	Extract from the Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten, M.A. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 193, NMML	1097
21.	3.5.1947	Nehru's Disagreement on NWFP Elections	Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, pp. 326-8	1098
22.	3.5.1947	'No Elections in NWFP'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1100
23.	4.5.1947	'Section 93 Cannot Be Applied in Frontier'	Report	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	1100
24.	5.5.1947	'Recall and Dismissal of Sir Olaf Caroe Demanded'	Extract from a Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1101
25.	7.5.1947	NWFP People Must be Given a Chance to Express Opinion	Statement by M.A. Jinnah	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. X, pp. 689-91	1102
26.	8.5.1947	League Movement in the Frontier Loses Track	Press Statement Issued by Ashutosh Lahiry	AIHM Papers, File No. C-165, NMML	1104

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28.	9.5.1947	'120 Red Shirts Join League: Bomb Explosion in Kohat: 123 Volunteers Arrested'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1106
29.	14.5.1947	'Badshah Khan's Call to Leaguers'	Report	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	1107
30.	20.5.1947	'250 Workers Arrested in Kohat, More Red Shirts Join League Movement'	Extract from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1108
31.	27.5.1947	Report from NWFP	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on NWFP for the First Half of May 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI	1109
32.	28.5.1947	'Campaign of Communal Aggression Can't Be Called Civil Disobedience'	Extract from a Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1110
33.	30.5.1947	'D.I.K. Scheduled Castes Support Pakistan'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1111
34.	1.6.1947	'Waziri Tribesmen Reaffirm Faith in Pakistan'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1111
35.	2.6.1947	'NWFP League Movement Withdrawn'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1111
36.	2.6.1947	Demand for Removal of NWFP Governor	Extract from a Note by M.K. Gandhi to Louis Mountbatten	CWMG, Vol. LXXXVIII, p. 60	1112

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1.	23.3.1947	Against Partition of Punjab	Extract from an Article	<i>The Tribune</i>	1114
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3.	2.4.1947	Appeal for Partition of Punjab into Two Provinces	Letter from Some Members of the Indian Central Legislature to Jawaharlal Nehru	IOR, R/3/1/157, Acc. No. 3820, NAI	1116

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4.	4.4.1947	Only Sikhs Can Demand Partition	Letter from Firoz Khan Noon to M.A. Jinnah	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I., Part I, pp. 495–6	1117
5.	6.4.1947	‘Haryana Jats Support Sikhs’ Demand’	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1118
6.	9.4.1947	Sikhs Prepare for Violent Attack on Muslims	Extract from a Letter from Evan Jenkins to Louis Mountbatten	IOR, R/3/1/176, Acc. No. 3477, NAI	1119
7.	10.4.1947	Sikhs Demand Partition	Note by Evan Jenkins on His Interview with Giani Kartar Singh	IOR, R/3/1/176, Acc. No. 3477, NAI	1121
8.	12.4.1947	Rejection of Congress Plan for Partition	Note by A.R. Khan	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I,; pp. 522–7	1123
9.	16.4.1947	Hindus–Sikhs Agree to Partition Punjab	Resolution Adopted by the Working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 120, NMML	1126
10.	19.4.1947	‘Ruinous for All Communities’	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1126
11.	21.4.1947	Create Separate Regional Administration until Partition	Letter from Bhim Sen Sachar to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. V, p. 292	1127
12.	26.4.1947	‘Ambala Muslims Oppose Partition of Punjab’	Extract from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1128
13.	30.4.1947	Attitude of Political Parties Remains Unchanged	Extract from a Letter from Evan Jenkins to Louis Mountbatten	IOR, R/3/1/178, Acc. No. 3479, NAI	1128
14.	1.5.1947	Partition of Punjab, Bengal, and Sind Necessary	Letter from Mast Ram Gupta to J.B. Kripalani	AICC Papers, File No. G-34/1947, NMML	1129
15.	1.5.1947	‘Division a Solution of Despair’	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1130
16.	1.5.1947	Plan for Partition of Punjab	Memorandum from Punjab Representatives in Constituent Assembly to H.L. Ismay	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 121, NMML	1132
17.	3.5.1947	‘Punjab Hindu Sabha Supports Partition’	Extract from a Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1136

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19.	4.5.1947	'Partition on Basis of Landed Property—Master Tara Singh's Demand'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1138
20.	5.5.1947	Increasing Demand for Plebiscite	Letter from S. Tarlok Singh to I.D. Scott	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 121, NMML	1139
21.	6.5.1947	'Harijans Want Partition of Punjab'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1140
22.	6.5.1947	PPCC Resolution on Partition of Punjab	Letter from General Secretary, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, to General Secretary, AICC	AICC Papers, File No. P-14, Part II, 1947–48, NMML	1140
23.	7.5.1947	Sikhs Unsafe under Muslim Domination	Telegram from Tara Singh, Baldev Singh, and Swaran Singh to Listowel	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. X, p. 660	1141
24.	7.5.1947	'Patiala Pleads for Separate Province for Jats'	Extract from a Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1142
25.	7.5.1947	'Sikhs Shall be Doomed in a Divided Punjab—Mamdot'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1142
26.	8.5.1947	Sikh Demand for a Separate Constituent Assembly	Extracts from a Letter from Major Short to Stafford Cripps	<i>TOP</i> Vol. X, pp. 693–6	1143
27.	9.5.1947	No Hope for Agreement	Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Listowel	Lionel Carter (Ed.), <i>Punjab Politics</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 175–6	1145
28.	10.5.1947	Partition Is the Only Alternative	Letter from Stafford Cripps to Clement Attlee	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. X, p. 741	1146
29.	10.5.1947	Congress Should Take Harder Stand on Partition of Punjab	Letter from Baldev Singh to J.B. Kripalani Forwarding His Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru	AICC Papers, File No. G-34/1947, NMML	1146

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31.	15.5.1947	'Memorandum to Viceroy: Arya Pradeshak Sabha's Demand'	Extract from a Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1150
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15.	21.4.1947	Students Support Bengal Partition	Memorandum from Calcutta University Students to J.B. Kripalani	S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 141, Installment II to IV, NMML	1170
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21.	27.4.1947	Partition of Bengal Is Suicide	Extract from a Note by H.S. Suhrawardy	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp.607–14	1179

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22.	28.4.1947	Status of Calcutta	Extract from a Telegram from Louis Mountbatten to J.F. Burrows	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 17, NMML	1182
23.	28.4.1947	'Bengal Leaders Confer—Partition Campaign to Be Intensified'	Report	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	1182
24.	28.4.1947	Unanimous Support for a Separate Hindu Province	Memorandum on Bengal by B.C. Roy, K.S. Roy and S.P. Mookerjee	S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 139, Installment II to IV, NMML	1183
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26.	29.4.1947	The Position of Calcutta with Regard to the Division of Bengal	Extract from a Note by W. Christie	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 17, NMML	1188
27.	29.4.1947	Representative Character of Scheduled Caste MLAs Questioned	Note by J.D. Tyson	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 17, NMML	1189
28.	30.4.1947	Scheduled Castes Should Be Mobilized in Bengal	Letter from J.N. Mandal to M.A. Jinnah	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp.632-3	1190
29.	30.4.1947	Agitation for Partition and the Need to Unseat the Bengal Ministry	Letter from N.C. Chatterjee to S.P. Mookerjee	S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 141, Instalment II to IV, NMML	1191
30.	2.5.1947	Need to Divide Bengal Irrespective of Partition of India	Letter from S.P. Mookerjee to Louis Mountbatten	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 18, NMML	1191
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32.	5.5.1947	Demand for Two Regional Ministries	Letter from Jogesh Chandra Mukherjee to S.P. Mookerjee	S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 141, Instalment II to IV, NMML	1195

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33.	5.5.1947	Congress Leader's Assurance about Securing Partition	Extract from a Letter from Rajendra Prasad to M.N. Saha	R.P. Papers, File No. 6-I/45-6-7, NAI	1195
34.	8.5.1947	Methods Adopted by the League to Garner Support	Letter from N. Dutt Mazumdar to Vallabhbhai Patel	SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 36-7	1196
35.	9.5.1947	Call for Two Interim Ministries Pending Partition	Resolution by Villagers of 24-Parganas Districts Forwarded to S.P. Mookerjee	S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 141, Instalment II to IV, NMML	1197
36.	10.5.1947	Stop Violence in Name of Religion	M.K. Gandhi's interview with Abul Hashem at Sodepur	CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 442-4	1197
37.	11.5.1947	Responsibility for Communal Violence	Gandhi's Interview with H.S. Suhrawardy	CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 452-3	1199
38.	12.5.1947	'Strong Condemnation of Move for Sovereign Bengal'	Extract from a Report	<i>Amrita Bazar Patrika</i>	1200
39.	12/13.5.1947	'Retain Bengal for Bengalis'	Letter from M.K. Gandhi to H.S. Suhrawardy	CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, p. 460	1201
40.	13.5.1947	United Bengal Should Be Based on 'Mutual Consent'	Record of Gandhi's Interview with S.P. Mookerjee at Sodepur	CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 464-5	1201
41.	13.5.1947	'Future of Bengal'	Extract from an Editorial	<i>Amrita Bazar Patrika</i>	1202
42.	13.5.1947	Opposition to Suhrawardy's Plans	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to K.C. Neogy	SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 39-40	1203
43.	14.5.1947	Nehru Disapproves of Sovereign Bengal	Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to S.P. Mookerjee	SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 147-8	1204
44.	15.5.1947	Bengal Hindus Persist with Demand for Partition	Telegram from V.D. Savarkar to S.P. Mookerjee	S.P. Mookerjee Papers, File No. 141, Instalment II to IV, NMML	1204
45.	16.5.1947	Adopting Term 'Socialist Republic' Debars Bengal from Commonwealth	Extract from a Letter from Louis Mountbatten to J.F. Burrows	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 18, NMML	1205

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47.	17.5.1947	Impossible for Hindus to Live under League Government	Letter from Abala Bose to Rajendra Prasad	R.P. Papers, File No. 6-I/45-6-7, NAI	1207
48.	17.5.1947	Report from Bengal Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bengal for the First Half of May 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI	1208
49.	19.5.1947	'Bengal Muslims Will Fight Partition Move—Maulana Akram'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1209
50.	19.5.1947	'No Agreement on Future Bengal Constitution Yet'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1210
51.	22.5.1947	Appeal to Stand United with Congress	Extract from a Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Sarat Bose	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 44–5	1210
52.	22.5.1947	Division of India Makes Partition of Punjab and Bengal Imperative	Extract from a Letter from Rajendra Prasad to Abala Bose	R.P. Papers, File No. 6-I/45-6-7, NAI.	1211
53.	23.5.1947	Bengal to Be Partitioned	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Binoy Kumar Roy	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. IV, p. 43.	1212
54.	23.5.1947	No Hindu Support for Anti-Partition Movement	Letter from H.S. Suhrawardy to Liaquat Ali Khan	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 864–5	1212
55.	24.5.1947	Bengal Must Not Be Partitioned	Letter from Liaquat Ali Khan to M.A. Jinnah	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 867–73	1213
56.	27.5.1947	Sovereign Bengal a Sinister Move from Muslim League	Letter from P.N. Banerjea to Rajendra Prasad	G.G. (Reforms), F.N. 41/3/47-R, Part IV, NAI	1216
57.	27.5.1947	Partition Disastrous	Extract from a Letter from Sarat Bose to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 45–6	1217
58.	28.5.1947	Governor's Assessment of the Political Situation in Bengal	Extract from a Letter from J.F. Burrows to Louis Mountbatten	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 18, NMML	1218
59.	28.5.1947	Move for Partitioning Bengal Being Sabotaged by Some Local Congressmen	Letter from Surendra Nath Sen to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 50–1	1219

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60.	30.5.1947	Sovereign Bengal Would Mean Perpetual Communal Strife	Letter from Secretary, Bengal Provincial Depressed Classes League, to Louis Mountbatten	G.G. (Reforms), File No. 41/3/47-R, Part V, NAI	1220
61.	31.5.1947	Muslim League Demands Inclusion of Calcutta in East Pakistan	Extract from a Memorandum from Calcutta District Muslim League and Others to M.A. Jinnah	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 947-60	1221
62.	31.5.1947	Calcutta Should Be a Free City—Jinnah	Letter from H.S. Suhrawardy to Eric Mieville	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. XI, p. 20	1227
63.	31.5.1947	League's Preparations to Resist Partition by Violent Means	Letter from Patel to Mountbatten	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 388-9	1228
64.	1.6.1947	Plan to Sabotage Bengal Partition Will Not Succeed	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Surendranath Sen	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. IV, p. 52	1229
65.	2.6.1947	'Nationalist Bengal Must Join Centre or Perish'	Extract from a Report	<i>Amrita Bazar Patrika</i>	1229

Chapter 22. Exercising Options: Referendum in North-West Frontier Province and Sylhet

A. NWFP

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2.	30.4.1947	Impending Referendum in NWFP	Letter from Firoz Khan Noon to M.A. Jinnah	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 633-4	1233
3.	5.5.1947	Caroe's Views on Referendum	Extracts from a Telegram from Louis Mountbatten to H.L. Ismay	IOR, R/3/1/151, Acc. No. 3819, NAI	1233
4.	10.5.1947	Consensus amongst Leaders Necessary for Referendum	Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, pp. 128-9	1234
5.	10.5.1947	No Need for Section 93 or Fresh Elections in NWFP	Telegram from Louis Mountbatten to Jawaharlal Nehru	IOR, R/3/1/151, Acc. No. 3819, NAI	1235
6.	14.5.1947	Pathans Demand Independent Sovereign State	Extract from a Report	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	1235

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7.	22.5.1947	Struggle for Pathan National Province under Coalition	Extract from a Letter from Olaf Caroe to John Colville	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. X, p. 944	1236
8.	31.5.1947	'Congress Has Miserably Failed in Frontier: Idea Of Pathanistan—A Stunt'	Extract from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1236
9.	31.5.1947	'Do Or Die'	M.K. Gandhi's Talk with Abdul Ghaffar Khan	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. LXXXVIII, p. 43	1237
10.	c. May 1947	Jinnah's Views on Referendum in NWFP	Letter from Eric Mieville to Louis Mountbatten	IOR, R/3/1/151, Acc. No. 3819, NAI.	1237
11.	1.6.1947	'Pathanistan Move Gains Momentum'	Extract from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1238
12.	2.6.1947	'Unity of Islam More Sacred Than Pathanistan: Ghaffar Khan's Propaganda Exposed'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1239

B. Sylhet

1.	8.5.1947	Bengal's Future Must Be Decided before Referendum in Sylhet	Telegram from J.F. Burrows to Louis Mountbatten	Mountbatten Papers, File No. 25, NMML	1239
2.	27.5.1947	Protest against Inclusion of Sylhet in East Bengal	Letter from P.B. Biswas to Congress and Hindu Mahasabha Leaders	S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 130, Installment II to IV, NMML	1240

Chapter 23. Minority Groups and Displaced Populations

1.	24.3.1947	Recovery of Abducted Women	Extract from a Note of an Interview between Evan Jenkins and Firoz Khan Noon	Lionel Carter, (Ed.), <i>Punjab Politics</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 255–6	1241
2.	24.3.1947	Establishment of Relief Camps	Extract from a Note by Evan Jenkins on His Interview with Kartar Singh and Jagjit Singh Mann	Lionel Carter, (Ed.), <i>Punjab Politics</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 253–5	1241
3.	26.3.1947	Arrangements for Relief Work	Note by Evan Jenkins about His Interview with Swaran Singh and Kartar Singh	Lionel Carter, (Ed.), <i>Punjab Politics</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 257–8	1242

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Document</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Page No.</i>
4.	4.4.1947	'More Valiant to Get Killed Than Kill'	M.K. Gandhi's Talk with Refugees from Rawalpindi	CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 200-1	1243
5.	8.4.1947	'League Relief Parties for Riot Areas'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1244
6.	14.4.1947	Relief Work Should Be Non-communal	Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Bhimsen Sachar	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, p. 304	1244
7.	20.4.1947	'Harijans Not Safe in "Domain of Pakistan": Mr P.S. Azad's View'	Extract from a Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1245
8.	23.4.1947	'Bihar Muslims Coming Back: Govt's Relief Plans'	Report	<i>The Tribune</i>	1246
9.	29.4.1947	'Ambedkar Neither Supports Nor Rejects Bengal Partition'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1246
10.	30.4.1947	Statements Made by Refugees of Tippera and Noakhali	Unstarred Questions in Bengal Legislative Assembly	<i>Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings</i> , Vol. LXXII, No. 3, West Bengal State Archives	1247
11.	2.5.1947	Demand for Anglo-Indian Representation in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly	Letter from C.E. Gibbon to M.A. Jinnah	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 678-9	1247
12.	5.5.1947	'Bihar Muslims' Prospects in Sind: Exchange of Property Issue'	Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1248
13.	5.5.1947	Relief Arrangements for Refugees in Hardwar	Letter from G.B. Pant to Vallabhbhai Patel	B.R. Nanda (Ed.), <i>Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant</i> , Vol. XI, p. 139	1250
14.	8.5.1947	Apprehension among the Hindu Minority in Quetta	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Jawaharlal Nehru	P.N. Chopra (Ed.), <i>Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel</i> , Vol. XII, pp. 80-1	1250

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Document</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Page No.</i>
15.	14.5.1947	'Bengal Partition Move, A Caste Hindu Attempt to Break Scheduled Caste Solidarity—Mandal'	Extract from a Report	<i>Dawn</i>	1251
16.	19.5.1947	Ministers Visit Riot-Affected Areas in D.I. Khan	Unamended Text of a Report from <i>The Hindustan Times</i>	Home Poll (I), File No. 33/11/47, NAI	1252
17.	22.5.1947	Refugee Problems Surfacing in United Provinces	Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to G.B. Pant	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. II, pp. 335–6	1255
18.	22.5.1947	Problems Created by Influx of Refugees	Unamended Text of an Indian News Agency Press Advice	Home Poll (I), File No. 33/11/47, NAI	1255
19.	26.5.1947	Rehabilitation Work by Hindu Mahasabha	Extracts from the Report by Secretary of Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha	S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 32, First Installment, NMML	1256
20.	30.5.1947	Appeal for Retention of British Rule over India	Letter from G. Abraham to M.A. Jinnah	<i>Jinnah Papers</i> , Vol. I, Part I, pp. 917–20	1260

Chapter 24. Volunteer Organizations

1.	29.3.1947	Need for a Volunteer Campaign to Counter League Propaganda	Letter from Khan Bahadur Saadullah to Vallabhbhai Patel	<i>SPC</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 230–1	1263
2.	2.4.1947	Report from NWFP	Extracts from the Fortnightly Report on NWFP for Second Half of March 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI	1264
3.	3.4.1947	Report from Bombay Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bombay for Second Half of March 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI	1266
4.	10.4.1947	Report from Orissa Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Orissa for the Second Half of March 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI	1268

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Document</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Page No.</i>
5.	6.4.1947	Training and Organization of the Proposed Hindustan National Guards	Letter from R.B. Phadke, Honorary Secretary, Militarization Board, to L.B. Bhopatkar	AIHM Papers, File No. C-143/1947, NMML	1270
6.	16.4.1947	Prohibiting Private Armies	Extracts from the minutes of Second Day of First Governor's Conference	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. X, pp. 277-8	1272
7.	2.5.1947	Report from Bombay Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bombay for the Second Half of April 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI	1274
8.	3.5.1947	Report from Sind Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Sind for the Second Half of April 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI	1276
9.	6.5.1947	Report from CP and Berar	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on CP and Berar for Second Half of April 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.	1278
10.	7.5.1947	Report from Punjab Province	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Punjab for the Second Half of April 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI	1279
11.	17.5.1947	All India Dharmasangh Launches a New Campaign	Extracts from a Memorandum from the Hindu Citizens of Delhi	Confidential Branch, File No. F44/47-C. 1947, Chief Commissioner's Office, Delhi State Archives	1280
12.	17.5.1947	Activities of Volunteer Armies in NWFP	Letter from Olaf Caroe to Louis Mountbatten	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. X., pp. 874-5	1281
13.	27.5.1947	Report from NWFP	Extract from the Fortnightly Report on NWFP for the First Half of May 1947	Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI	1282
14.	28.5.1947	'Hindustan National Guard in Bengal: Dr Mookerjee's Appeal for Men & Money'	Report	<i>Hindustan Standard</i>	1283

Section I

1 JANUARY 1947
TO
22 MARCH 1947

Chapter 1. Constituent Assembly

1. Rajendra Prasad Denies Allegations That Constituent Assembly Is Not Representative

Statement in the Constituent Assembly Session, 20 January 1947

Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. II, p. 267.

The Constituent Assembly of India met in the Constitution Hall, New Delhi, at Eleven of the Clock, Mr President (The Hon'ble Dr Rajendra Prasad) in the Chair.

Presentation of Credentials and Signing of the Register

The following members presented their credentials and signed the Register.

1. Dr H.C. Mookherjee
2. Shri Balkrishna Sharma

Statement by President Re: Allegations in Parliament about the Representative Character of the Constituent Assembly

Mr President: Before we begin, I should like to make two statements in connection with certain matters.

In the course of the debates on India in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords in December last, certain statements were made detracting from the representative character of this Assembly during its last session. Notable among those who spoke in this strain were Mr Churchill and Viscount Simon. Mr Churchill observed that the Assembly, as it was meeting then, represented 'only one major community in India'. Viscount Simon was more specific and referred to the Assembly as 'a body of Hindus'. He went on further to ask 'whether this meeting of Caste Hindus at Delhi can be regarded by the Government as the Constituent Assembly they meant at all'.

Both these gentlemen have held the highest offices of responsibility and have had a long and intimate connection with the affairs of India; and whatever may be their views on current political controversies, they would not, I am sure, like to make statements which are wholly contrary to facts and lead to mischievous inferences. It is for this reason that I have considered it necessary on this occasion formally to state the facts. Out of a total of 926 Members who were to take part in the preliminary session, 210 Members attended. These 210 Members consisted of 155 Hindus out of a total of 160, 30 Scheduled Caste representatives out of a total of 33, all the 5 Sikhs, 5 Indian Christians out of a total of 7, all the 5 representatives of Backward Tribes, all 3 Anglo-Indians, all 3 Parsis and 4 Muslims out of 80. The significant absence is of course that of the representatives of the Muslim League—an absence which we all deeply regret. But it is clear from the figures I have quoted that, with the exception of representatives of the Muslim

League, every community in India, whatever the party affiliation of the persons representing that community, was represented in the Assembly; and, therefore, to describe the Assembly as representing 'only one major community in India' or as 'a body of Hindus' or as a 'meeting of Caste Hindus' is a complete travesty of facts. (Cheers)

2. Discussions on the Objectives Resolution

Extracts from Discussion in the Constituent Assembly, 20 January 1947

Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. II, pp. 269–89.

Mr President: We will now take up the discussion of the Resolution moved during the last session by the Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Sir S. Radhakrishnan (United Provinces: General): Mr Chairman, Sir, I have great pleasure in commending this Resolution to the acceptance of the House. From the list of amendments tabled, I see that there are three different questions raised: whether a declaration of this character is essential; whether this is the proper time for considering such a declaration; and thirdly, whether the objectives included in this Resolution are matters of general agreement or they require modification or Amendment.

I believe that such a declaration is essential. There are people who are suspicious, who are wavering, who are hostile, who look upon the work of this Constituent Assembly with considerable misgivings. There are people who affirm that, within the Cabinet Plan, it will not be possible for us to effect either real unity in the country or true freedom or economic security. They tell us that they have seen before squirrels move round in a cage, and that within the limits of this Cabinet Statement, it will not be possible for us to effect the revolutionary changes which the country is aiming at. They argue from history that revolutionary changes are generally effected by violent action overthrowing established Governments. The British people were able to end monarchical despotism that way; the United States of America attained her primary freedom through direct action; the French, the Bolshevik, the Fascist and the Nazi revolutions were also effected by similar methods. We are told that we cannot effect revolutionary changes through peaceful methods, through negotiation and discussion in constituent assemblies. We reply that we have similar ends; we wish to bring about a fundamental alteration in the structure of Indian society. We wish to end our political and economic dependence, but those who are strong of spirit, those who are not short of sight, take their chances—they make their chances. Here is a chance that is open to us and we wish to use this to find out whether it will be possible for us to gain the revolutionary ends by methods which are unusual so far as past history is concerned. We want to try whether it will not be possible for us to effect a smooth and rapid transition from a state of serfdom to one of freedom. That is the undertaking which this particular Assembly has on hand. We wish to tell all those who are abstaining from this Assembly that it is not our desire to establish any sectional Government. We are not here asking anything for a particular community or a privileged class. We are here working for the establishment of Swaraj for all the Indian people. It will be our endeavour to abolish every vestige of despotism, every heirloom of inorganic tradition. We are here to bring about real satisfaction of the fundamental needs of the common man of this country, irrespective of race, religion or community. If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, we cannot rally the people to our support. It is therefore essential that our bugle-call, our trumpet-sound, must be clear, must give the people a sense of exhilaration, must give the suspicious and the abstaining a sense of

reassurance that we are here pledged to achieve full independence of India, where no individual will suffer from undeserved want, where no group will be thwarted in the development of its cultural life. Therefore I believe that a declaration of objectives of this character is essential and it is not necessary for us to wait till this Assembly is fuller than it happens to be at the present moment.

Now let us turn to the objectives themselves. We resolve that India shall be an Independent, Sovereign Republic. On the question of independence there is no difference of opinion. Premier Attlee, in his first statement, made on 15th March, said:

‘I hope that the Indian people may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth. I am certain that she will find great advantages in doing so; but if she does so elect, it must be by her own free will. The British Commonwealth and Empire is not bound together by chains of external compulsion. If, on the other hand, she elects for independence, in our view she has a right to do so.’

The Muslim League and the Princes have all agreed to it. In the Memorandum on States’ Treaties and Paramountcy, presented by the Cabinet Mission to the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on the 12th May, 1946, it is said that—

‘The Chamber has since confirmed that the Indian States fully share the general desire in the country for the immediate attainment by India of her full stature. His Majesty’s Government have now declared that, if the Succession [*sic*] Government or Governments in British India declare independence, no obstacle would be placed in their way. The effect of these announcements is that all those concerned with the future of India wish her to attain a position of independence within or without the British Commonwealth.’

All those concerned with the future of India, the Congress, the Muslim League, and other organizations and the Princes also, they all desire independence for India within or without the British Commonwealth.

Mr Churchill, in the House of Commons, referring to His Majesty’s Government’s offer of independence, said on the 1st of July, 1946—

However, it is another matter when we try to short-circuit the process and say ‘Take independence now’. That is what the Government are going to get and they are going to get it very soon. They should not blind themselves to the idea. There is going to be no hesitation on the part of those with whom the Government is dealing in taking full and immediate independence. That is what is going to happen.

This Resolution on the objectives does not wish to disappoint Mr Churchill. (*Hear, hear*). It tells him that the expected is happening. You gave us the choice to get out of the British Commonwealth. We are electing to go out of the British Commonwealth. May I say why? So far as India is concerned, it is not a mere Dominion like Australia, like New Zealand or Canada or South Africa. These latter are bound to Great Britain by ties of race, religion and culture. India has a vast population, immense natural resources, a great cultural heritage and has had an independent career for a very long time, and it is inconceivable that India can be a Dominion like the other Dominions.

Secondly, let us consider the implications of what happened at the United Nations Organization, when the Indian Delegation, headed by our distinguished colleague, Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit, so ably defended the rights of Indians in South Africa—look at the attitude that was adopted by Great Britain. Great Britain along with Canada and Australia supported South Africa, New Zealand abstaining from voting. It shows that there is

a community of ideals between Great Britain and the other Dominions in which India has no share. There is no sense of belonging in the British Commonwealth. We do not feel that we are all members, enjoying similar rights as parts of the British Commonwealth. Some of you may also have heard of the recent move launched by Mr Churchill and Lord Templewood for a European Union under the fostering care and leadership of Great Britain. That also shows in what way the wind is blowing.

Yet, even though India may elect to quit the British Commonwealth, there are a hundred different ways of voluntary co-operation, ways of mutual collaboration, in trade, in defence, in matters of culture; but whether all these forms of mutual co-operation are going to develop in a spirit of friendship, trust and harmony, or whether they will be allowed to die out in mutual distrust and recrimination, depends entirely on the attitude which Great Britain will adopt in this crisis. This Resolution about the Indian Republic seems to have irritated Mr Churchill and his followers. Our Chairman today referred to one statement by Mr Churchill and I will refer to some others.

When the debate on Burma took place, Mr Churchill stated that the annexation of Burma happened during his father's Secretaryship, and that now Burma is given the liberty to get out of the British Commonwealth. He seems to look upon Burma and India as parts of his ancestral estate, and now when they are passing out, he seems to be terribly disheartened.

On the debate on India, he asked His Majesty's Government to remember its obligations 'to the Muslims, numbering 90 millions, who comprised the majority of the fighting elements of India'—truth is not rated high in Indian debates and international intercourse—'and of untouchables of anything from 40 to 60 millions.' He refers to the representatives of the Great Congress Party as the mouthpiece 'of actively organized and engineered minorities who, having seized upon power by force, or fraud or chicanery, go forward and use, that power in the name of vast masses with whom they have long since lost all effective connection.' A party of men who have braved the perils of life, who have suffered for their patriotism, whose love of country and capacity for sacrifice are second to none in the whole world who are led by one who is today leading a lonely trek in a far off corner of India, bearing on his aging shoulders the burden of a nation's shame and sorrow, to talk of that party in the way in which Mr Churchill has done is—I do not know how to describe it. (Cries of shame). Mr Churchill's outbursts are bereft of dignity or discretion. Provocative and irrelevant remarks, sneers of derision in regard to our communal divisions, have punctuated his speech on that occasion and on other occasions. I shall only say here that such speeches and such statements cannot prevent the end but can only postpone it and thus prolong the agony. The British connection will end, it must end. Whether it ends in friendship and goodwill or in convulsions and agony, depends upon the way in which the British people treat this great problem. .

Republic is a word which has disturbed some of the representatives of the States in this country. We have said from this platform that a Republican India does not mean the abolition of Princely rule. Princes may continue; Princes will be there so long as they make themselves constitutional so long as they make themselves responsible to the people of the states. If the great paramount power which is sovereign in this country by conquest, is now transferring responsibility to the representatives of the people, it goes without saying that those who depend on that paramount power should do what the British have done. They must also transfer responsibility to the representatives of the people.

We cannot say that the republican tradition is foreign to the genius of this country. We have had it from the beginning of our history. When a few merchants from the north went

down to the south, one of the Princes of the Deccan asked the question: 'Who is your King?' The answer was, 'Some of us are governed by assemblies, some of us by kings.'

Kecid deso ganadhina kecid rajadhina.

Panini, Megasthenes and Kautilya refer to the Republics of Ancient India. The Great Buddha belonged to the Republic of Kapilavastu.

Much has been said about the sovereignty of the people. We have held that the ultimate sovereignty rests with the moral law, with the conscience of humanity. People as well as kings are subordinate to that, Dharma, righteousness, is the king of kings.

Dharmam Kshatrasya shatram.

It is the ruler of both the people and the rulers themselves. It is the sovereignty of the law which we have asserted. The Princes—I count many of them amongst my personal friends—have agreed with the Cabinet Statement and wished to take their share in the future development of this country, and I do hope that they will realize that it is their duty to take notice of the surging hopes of their peoples and make themselves responsible. If they do so, they will play a notable part in the shaping of our country. We have no ill-will towards the Princes. The assertion of republicanism, the assertion of the sovereignty of the people, do not in any manner indicate any antagonism to the Princely rule itself. They do not refer to the present facts of past history of the Indian States but they indicate the future aspirations of the peoples of the States.

The next thing that we find in this Resolution is about the Union of India. The Cabinet Statement has ruled out the partition of India. Geography is against it. Military strategy is against it. The aspirations of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs from the very beginning have been against it. The present tendency is for larger and larger aggregations. Look at what has happened in America, in Canada and Switzerland. Egypt wishes to be connected with Sudan, South Ireland wishes to be connected with North Ireland. Palestine is protesting against any division. Again nationalism, not religion, is the basis of modern life. Allenby's liberating campaigns in Egypt, Lawrence's adventures in Arabia, Kemal Pasha's defiant creation of a secular Turkey, point out that the days of religious States are over. These are the days of nationalism. The Hindus and Muslims have lived together in this country for over a thousand years. They belong to the same land, speak the same language. They have the same racial ancestry. They have a common destiny to work for. They interpenetrate one another. It is not a kind of Ulster, which we can separate; but our Ulster is a ubiquitous one. Even if we have two States, there will be large minorities and these minorities, whether really oppressed or not, will look across their frontiers and ask for protection. This will be a source of continual strife which will go on, as long as we do not have a United India. We realize that while a strong Centre is essential to mould all the peoples into one united whole, on account of the grievances real or imaginary we have to be satisfied with a Centre which is limited to the three subjects, which the Cabinet Plan has put before us. Therefore, we are proceeding on the principle of Provincial Autonomy, with the residuary powers to the Provinces themselves. Events that have happened in Bihar and Bengal, tell us that there is an urgent need for a strong Centre. Yet as there are these difficulties, we propose to develop a multi-national state which will give adequate scope for the play of variations among the different cultures themselves.

Grouping has given us a lot of trouble. But grouping is subject to two essential factors—which are the integral parts of the Cabinet Plan,—a Union Centre and residuary powers in the Provinces; and in these Groups also we will have large minorities. Those who are

insistent on the rights of minorities will have to concede these rights to others who happen to be included in the Groups. In a statement made by Sir Stafford Cripps on 18 July, 1946, he said:

A fear was expressed that somehow or other the new Provincial Constitutions might be so manoeuvred as to make it impossible for the Provinces afterwards to opt out. I do not myself see how such a thing would be possible, but if anything of that kind were to be attempted, it would be a clear breach of the basic understanding of this Scheme.

That is what Sir Stafford Cripps said. If any attempt is made to so manipulate electorates as to make it difficult for the Provinces to opt out, then that would be, in the words of Sir Stafford Cripps, 'a clear breach of the basic understanding of this Scheme'. After all we have to live together and it is impossible to impose any constitution against the wishes of the people who are to be governed by that Constitution.

There is also a reference to fundamental rights in this Resolution. It is a socio-economic revolution that we are attempting to bring about. It is therefore necessary that we must re-make the material conditions; but apart from re-making the material conditions, we have to safeguard the liberty of the human spirit. It is no good creating conditions of freedom without producing a sense of freedom. The mind of man must have full liberty to flower and mature and to grow to its fullest stature. The progress of man is due to the play of his mind, now creating, now destroying, always transmuting. We must safeguard the liberty of the human spirit against the encroachments of the State. While State regulation is necessary to improve economic conditions, it should not be done at the expense of the human spirit.

We are actors today in a great historical drama. We are involved in it and therefore we are unable to perceive the large contours of it. This declaration, which we make today, is of the nature of a pledge to our own people and a pact with the civilized world.

The question was put by Mr Churchill to Mr Alexander whether this Assembly is functioning validly. Mr Alexander said:

I repeat, the scheme for elections for the Constituent Assembly was carried out. If the Muslim League abstained from going there, how can you prevent a duly elected Assembly from going on to do its business?

That is what Mr Alexander said. There was some difficulty about the interpretation of the grouping. Much against its will, the Congress has accepted His Majesty's Government's interpretation. The only two clauses that remain are adequate safeguards for minorities, and a treaty on the problems which arise out of transfer of power. The Constituent Assembly is legally functioning. Every part of the State Paper has been completely accepted and if we are able to frame adequate safeguards for minorities, safeguards which will satisfy not so much the British or our own people, but the civilized conscience of the world, then while yet the British have the power to put it into action, they must give this Constitution the force of law. It is essential that they should do so. If after all these conditions are satisfied, if some excuse is invented for postponing the independence of India, it would be the most callous betrayal of history. If, on the other hand, the British argue that the Constituent Assembly has started functioning on the basis of the Cabinet Plan and they have accepted every clause of the State Paper of 16 May, and have provided adequate safeguards for all minorities and therefore they should implement it, then it will be an achievement of history which will secure the co-operation and goodwill of two great peoples.

In that very speech which Mr Attlee made as the Prime Minister on 15th March, he said:

In the mass of Asia, an Asia ravaged by war, we have here the one country that has been seeking to apply the principles of democracy. I have always felt myself that political India might be the light of Asia....

may, the light of the world giving to its distracted mind an integral vision and to its bewildered will an upward direction.

Here are the two alternatives. Accept the Constituent Assembly. Take its findings. Find out whether there are adequate safeguards for minorities or not. If they are there, give them the force of law and you may get co-operation. If, after all these conditions are fulfilled, you still try to make out that something is lacking, the British will be understood as violating the spirit of the whole State Paper, and the dark possibilities which will lie ahead of us in the present world conditions, I do not wish to contemplate.

Mr N.V. Gadgil (Bombay: General): Mr Chairman, I have great pleasure in supporting the Resolution which has been moved by The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In the course of the discussion it was pointed out that this Constituent Assembly was not competent to pass a resolution of this character. In this connection, I respectfully draw the attention of this House to the opening paragraph of the Statement in which a quotation from the speech of the Premier Mr Attlee is given. Therein he says that—

My colleagues are going to India with the intention of using their utmost endeavours to help her to attain her freedom as speedily and fully as possible. What form of Government is to replace the present regime is for India to decide; but our desire is to help her to set up forthwith the machinery for making that decision.

It is clear, Sir, that this Assembly is here to evolve not only the form of Government but to lay down what the content of the same will be. I wish to state here, Sir, that we are not here as mere drafters of a constitution or choppers of logic. We are here, as a matter of fact, as a council of action, and this meeting of the Constituent Assembly is a stage in the progress of the struggle for freedom. It may possible be the penultimate battle or the last battle that will end the war of freedom, which has been carried on for over 75 years or more, from generation to generation. An inheritance of struggle has been left to us by our predecessors; but I do hope that when this generation is over, the inheritance it will leave, will not be an inheritance of struggle, but an inheritance of creative effort, whereby the future society of India will be built up.

Sir, there is a clear necessity for defining the objective. In the past those who have really contributed to this struggle are not the few professors and Privy Councillors, but they are the people who have been toiling in poverty, in ignorance. They have got to know what is it that they have fought for so far, and what is it in the ultimate they will be asked to fight for in case the Constitution we may frame here is not acceptable to the British Government. Now, Sir, in this Resolution, as I see it, there is nothing to which any person or any party, who is anxious to have freedom, can take objection. In the first place, the main objective is defined as an Independent Sovereign Republic. As far as I know, Sir, from the various resolutions that have been passed by the Muslim League in the course of the last six years or more, they have always stated that they are for democratic freedom. In fact, the Islamic country that leads the Islamic world, namely, Turkey, today, is a Republic. Therefore, there is nothing in this to which the Muslim League can take any objection. Let us therefore see what are the merits in this proposition and if it can be pointed out that there is anything objectionable, then, certainly, it is a matter which can be adjusted when those who want to take objection are here. But as far

as I am able to see there is nothing, no phrase, no clause in this Resolution to which anybody can take objection.

Taking the several sub-paragraphs in this Resolution, the main thing that is provided for is one State, one Union. At the same time here is enough scope for every province to grow and expand and, there is nothing to prevent any province from reaching its utmost goal, consistent with the common obligation. At the same time, I wish to point out that it provides a field which gives wider scope for higher statesmanship, for higher scholarship, for better commerce and larger industries. If there is such a Union, it means there is greater political security and the Union will have economically more bargaining power. Viewed from any point of view, a State covering all the geographical unit, known as India, is a necessity for every province, for every constituent State that may go to constitute this Union. By joining they will have nothing to lose and, in my humble opinion much to gain.

Now, Sir, it also provides for fundamental rights and these fundamental rights are, what are most cherished by the common man. It provides freedom of association, freedom of speech and all other civil liberties which are to be found in the Constitution of every country. Some objection was raised because many things are not clear. Obviously, all things cannot be included in a Resolution of this kind. But if one carefully goes through the relevant portion which deals with fundamental rights, it lays down that there will be economic justice, which can only be secured if the production in the country ultimately comes to be socially owned. Private enterprise may be there, but in a limited manner. If economic justice is to be secured, it can only be, if the means of production come to be owned by the State as such. Therefore, if matters today appear somewhat not very clear, I am sure, that when these principles are incorporated in the sections of the Constitution, these matters will be made perfectly clear.

Sir, this is a sort of building. The whole Resolution has a unity just as this hall in which we are assembled. The dome is standing on the various arches down below. Similarly, the freedom contemplated is supported by the various principles which are incorporated in the Resolution and that has given balance and poise to the structure. As I said, this Resolution is absolutely necessary and though textually it may not be a part of the Constitution, that may come ultimately to be framed, it is a sort of a spiritual preamble which will pervade every section, every clause and every schedule and as I said, Sir, it is necessary. It is a sort of a dynamic, a driving power which will be available to those who will be charged with the framing of the Constitution in detail. This is in fact the foundation. People will know what they are to get. It will be a constitution which will evoke the necessary loyalty from every citizen whom it is to govern. For no constitution can evoke loyalty, no constitution can evoke the necessary sentiment unless it offers every citizen sufficient inspiration to defend it, if it comes to it, by laying down his own life.

Sir, as I said, this is not an Assembly in which are gathered mere drafters of the Constitution; it is a sort of a council of action. We are here because of the struggle that has been carried on by the people, and we have to frame the Constitution. If that Constitution is framed and not granted, people ask what is the sanction. To that my humble answer is that there are two kinds of sanctions, one, the moral sanction and the other, physical. If our Constitution is just and fair to every legitimate interest in this country, that provides the first kind of sanction; and the second kind of sanction is the determination of the people to see that whatever form of Government they have decided to adopt, is there, and if it is not granted by any power, then that determination will not be merely academic but it will work in concrete forms, though the forms may be stated today. I submit that as the Constitution proceeds from clause to clause

and section to section, people will gradually know how things are moving and in fact, I feel, Sir, that there will be created such an atmosphere in the country that the necessary temper for revolution will be augmented and will be ready for use. I submit that as we proceed from clause to clause and section to section, British power in this country will be withering and by the time we reach the last schedule, we will find that the British State, so far as India is concerned, has withered away. What will be left then, will be a formal repeal of the British power, for do we not read the writing on the wall, do we not see that the pictures of those who ruled India with repression, ruthless repression, with extraordinary laws and ordinances gone? Where are the pictures? They are all gone. There you can see the writing on the wall. Mr President, it has been pointed out that the Britishers are very anxious to leave this country. In fact years ago, Macaulay wrote that it would be a glorious day for Britishers when Indian people would ask them to vacate. We have been asking them so long; but apart from what Lord Macaulay has said, the Empire that had begun in perjuries and forgeries of Clive and Hastings, sustained throughout by broken promises, and which is still sought to be continued by diplomatic clarifications, by fleeting and flexible explanations, must end. These explanations will not make it survive a day more. There must be an honest deed of transfer in favour of the masses who have suffered so long and so much under the foreign rule. The day must come when they must come into their own. If the transfer is peaceful, well and good; but if it does not come peacefully, and if a struggle becomes necessary and history demands that there must be a struggle, I can only say that we do not want to fight but if we have to, then we have got the men, we have got the material and we have got the mind too. But in that case what will happen? Britishers will go—stocks and shares, shops and workshops,—they will leave nothing behind, not even goodwill or good memories. Their trade and flag both will disappear. It is for them to decide whether they want to live upto their great ideal which was stated by Lord Macaulay or they still want to cling and ultimately meet the fate which I have just visualized.

Mr President, we have come to a stage when it becomes necessary to say in the clearest possible terms what we want to have. We have been told that other questions, such as minorities are there, difficult of solution, I want to make it clear, Sir, that this is a problem which is the creation of the foreign power. Nobody has ever succeeded in preventing the coming together of the waters of Jumna and Ganges beyond Allahabad (*hear, hear*); because there the three streams Ganges, Jumna and Saraswati (wisdom) join and after that nobody can distinguish the waters of Jumna from the waters of Ganges. The time has come when wisdom will dawn on both the communities and the result will be that they will form a higher unity, a higher synthesis, in which everybody will have his opportunity to rise to the highest level of life and personality. Now it has been said that it will not be possible in the near future to get what we desire. It may be a short or a long struggle but whether it is a long struggle or a short struggle although we do not want it or invoke it, if it comes, everyone of us must be prepared for it. Sir, the task that has been cast on these representatives who are gathered here, is great and historic. I have no doubt that they will rise to the occasion and lead this ancient country to its goal of freedom. They will bring into existence a society where men will be valued not by what they have, but by what they are, where men will be measured in terms of character and not in terms of coin, where pride will be a back number and prejudice will be tongue-tied, where men and women can hold their heads high, where they will be happy, because they will be equal, where religion will not be a battle-field, for all will be the worshippers of one Goddess—the Goddess of Duty, where race will not evoke arrogance on one hand and inflict humiliation on the other, for all will belong to one race, namely, the race of workers, where creeds will not disintegrate the

people, for their creed will be of service to all, where freedom and plenty will be available, for none will have the monopoly of power or prosperity. All will be happy because all will be equal. It is a vision no doubt but a vision is necessary if one wants to live a life, a life with aim and purpose and for that one must have a vision; otherwise it will be the life of a crow.

Kakoni Jivati Chiraya Balimcha Bhunkie. 'Even a crow lives long on crumbs'.

We do not want that sort of life. It is a vision no doubt. All I can say in conclusion is, that unless we have vision, we cannot progress, for a people without vision perish. (*Cheers.*)

The Hon'ble Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit (United Provinces: General): Mr President, it was my privilege in 1937 to move the first resolution after the inauguration of Provincial Autonomy in my Province, demanding a Constituent Assembly to draw up a constitution for an independent India. Today, ten years later, that Constituent Assembly is meeting here. This is a historic milestone in our progress toward freedom and yet, Sir, freedom remains just a little beyond our grasp. Imperialism dies hard and even though it knows its days are numbered, it struggles for survival. We have before us the instance of what is happening in Burma, in Indonesia, in Indo-China, and we see, how in those countries, in spite of the desperate efforts that the peoples are putting up to free themselves, the stranglehold of imperialism is so great that they are unable easily to shake it off. Reactionary elements in every country are getting together, Sir, under the guise of seeking protection, clinging to the Imperialist power and trying thereby to strengthen it. We have seen the sorry spectacle of what happened in San Francisco when the United Nations Organization was being born. The Asiatic nations assembled there, were dominated by the Imperialist powers and could not speak independently but only echoed the voice of their respective Imperialist powers. The result has already been seen in the fact that in spite of the brave words of the Charter, that came into existence at that time, no implementation of that Charter was possible because there was not enough strength behind it. The people of Asia were silent and could not insist upon its implementation. Even today, Asia is far behind the peoples of Europe in representation in the United Nations and it was perhaps the first time in history that at the last United Nations Assembly, a country, not free itself, was able to raise its voice for the freedom of oppressed and dependent peoples all over the world. (*Cheers.*) The fact, that the United Nations Assembly has recognized this, is because India even today has shown within herself the power of giving a lead to the world. An Independent India would no doubt assume leadership not only of Asia but of the world, and so when we meet here in this Assembly to draw up the future Constitution of our country, we must not forget that it is not only to ourselves we owe a duty but also to the world which looks to us....

The Resolution before us stresses complete freedom for the individual and concedes guarantees to every legitimate group. Therefore in this there is no justification for fear for the minorities. Even though certain minorities have special interests to safeguard they should not forget, that they are parts of the whole, and if the larger interest suffers, there can be no question of real safeguarding of the interest of any minority. In an Independent India minorities will not be able to look to outside powers for help without being termed 'traitors'. We have had too much talk of rights in recent years and very little about obligations. This approach to any problem is unfortunate. The Resolution before us deals with problems which are fundamental to all of us and only to the extent that they are solved, can we safeguard the rights of any special minority. The Resolution indicates clearly that in an independent India the fullest social economic and cultural justice to individuals and groups will be conceded and, through our design for living, we shall be helping other nations to decide the pattern of their own lives.

Our own design must therefore be right and must be made with the co-operation and strength of the entire country.

Of all the Asiatic countries, India alone has stood for democracy throughout the years. In all our chequered history we have fought for the will of the people to triumph. In recent years, even at great peril and at personal sacrifice, the people of this country have adhered to the ideal of democracy, and, today, we are in a position of showing to the world that we can implement our ideals. The Resolution under discussion is clear in substance and in wording, but I would like to stress two points.

We have before us two aspects—the positive and the negative. The negative aspect is concerned with the ending of the imperialist domination of our country and in that we all agree. But the more important side to the question is the positive side, which means the building up in our country of a social democratic State which will enable India to fulfil her destiny and point the path of lasting peace and progress to the world. At this moment in our national history, we cannot afford to fritter away our energies in any talk or action which will defeat our objective; nor must we indulge in unreasoning fears. We must accept the challenge that has been offered and march together in order to realize the positive side of this picture.

The end of the War has created many problems, difficult in themselves and made more complex by the fact that individual demands are placed before the interest of the whole; that many nations, being still dependent, are unable to raise their voice in support or protest. But India is in a position to contribute substantially to a solution of the present problems and also in maintaining peace and security in the world. A free India becomes a power for the forces of progress. In this age of the building up of one world, we cannot talk of separate nations. We have to work in order to build up one world, of which India shall be a worthy partner. India has the right to lead because of her heritage, and also because of her present, when in the face of the complexity of her own problems, she has stood up and estimated values and not let go all those ideals which she had placed before her. Our contribution to the future is one of neutralization of political and social discontents and to that end, we must work by the establishment of freedom in our own country and helping all those who strive for freedom in the world. Unless Asia comes into her own, the world cannot function as a whole. A world which is divided into groups cannot be secure. A famous American has said, 'No nation can exist half slave, and half free'. The same applies to the world, since freedom is not divisible. India must free herself socially, economically and then free others, and in the Resolution before us we find an attempt to work towards that end. By it, we redeem the pledge we have taken. I appeal to the Members of this House to pass the Resolution in order to show that this ancient land is conscious of the challenge that has been presented to her and can live up to the ideals and heritage of her past.

Prof. N.G. Ranga (Madras: General): Mr Chairman and friends, I am extremely glad to be able to support this Resolution. It does not mean that I am quite satisfied with it; but so far as this Resolution goes, it places before us the most effective, the most comprehensive and liberal idea of the future that our people can look forward to, once our new Constitution comes into existence. But it is much more than a liberal view of things, because it is not content with placing high ideals and noble ideas before our people. It also takes into consideration the need for assuring to our people the actual enjoyment of the rights that are stated herein, and it is in this manner that this Resolution goes far beyond similar resolutions that had been moved in other constituent assemblies and similar ideas incorporated in other constitutions of the world.

There is one other aspect also in which this Resolution is very much in advance. While in other constitutions, no specific mention has been made to assure the people the right of freedom of action in pursuance of their ideals, in pursuit of their aims, this Resolution makes it perfectly clear that our people will have the right to act whenever they find it necessary, provided such action is within the law and also in conformity with the moral standards of our people. That is a very important matter, because, from time to time, both in this country and in other countries, governments used to come forward to deny the right of the people to rebel against any particular law, any particular ordinance, any particular dictate of that particular government, and threatened the people and told them that they had absolutely no right whatsoever to go against the established law. But, Sir, while political philosophers were merely content in other countries, philosophers like Harold Laski and others, with exhorting the people to be ever ready to stand up to their rights, their obligations and civil liberties, here in India alone, the opportunity has been given—thanks to the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi—to offer *satyagraha* on a mass scale and to claim that right not only for large bodies of people, organized and unorganized, but also for individuals. Again and again, we have been able to reiterate our right to rise against injustice, to go against any particular law or system of laws and thus maintain that only in that way can the civil liberties of the people and also all their personal and individual rights be maintained. The State as well as human beings are liable to err and there must be some safeguard against their mistakes, and the only safeguard that can be found will be *satyagraha*. Therefore, Sir, I welcome this Resolution for that reason also.

Several people in this country have been complaining that such and such parties have not taken part in this Assembly and such and such other sections have not been able to come into the orbit of this Assembly and its work, and therefore, we have no right whatsoever to consider a resolution like this. Is it necessary, Sir, that all the members in a family should be present in council where the point for consideration is that the total property of that family should be increased, should be augmented? Can there be a member of any family who would be opposed to the increase of the moral and material prosperity and the rights of that particular family? This Resolution is nothing but that. We are here assembled to consider in what manner the rights and obligations, the powers and duties of every individual in this country, groups of people and the whole country, can be raised, increased and augmented. At this juncture it does not matter, if some of us are not able to be in the House. It may be that for various reasons of their own, certain parties have kept themselves away; but that need not prevent us from trying to go ahead in order to increase the total heritage of our people, in order to augment the total rights and strength of our country.

Sir, at the same time, I said this is not enough and I would like to say a few words about that. It is all very well to go back to our villages and to our friends and tell them that we have passed a resolution like this and that in future all their rights will be safeguarded and they will have no fears in regard to the future. But will it be enough if those people get the right to live, to have full employment, to gain their fundamental rights, if they are only told that they will be able to have their meetings, their conferences, their associations and various other civil liberties? Is it not necessary to enable them to create such conditions in life as will enable them to enjoy these rights that we have enumerated here? It is a fact Sir, it is a miserable fact, that millions and millions of our countrymen are not yet able to take advantage of the various liberties that we have laid down here, the various privileges, that we say, are being thrown open for everyone to enjoy. They are not educated. Economically, they are oppressed and suppressed also, and socially they are backward and downtrodden. For all these people,

so many more things have to be done, may be for some time to come, before they come to enjoy these rights. They need props. They need a ladder, by which they can reach on to the stage when it will be possible for them to come to appreciate the value of the rights that we are placing before them and enjoy them.

Sir, there is a lot of talk about minorities. Who are the real minorities? Not the Hindus in the so-called Pakistan provinces, not the Sikhs, not even the Muslims. No, the real minorities are the masses of this country. These people are so depressed and oppressed and suppressed till now that they are not able to take advantage of the ordinary civil right. What is the position? You go to the tribal areas. According to law, their own traditional law, their tribal law, their lands cannot be alienated. Yet our merchants go there, and in the so-called free market they are able to snatch their lands. Thus, even though the law goes against this snatching away of their lands, still the merchants are able to turn the tribal people into veritable slaves by various kinds of bonds, and make them hereditary bond-slaves. Let us go to the ordinary villagers. There goes the money-lender with his money and he is able to get the villagers in his pocket. There is the landlord himself, the *zamindar*, and the *mal-guzar* and there are the various other people who are able to exploit these poor villagers. There is no elementary education even among these people. These are the real minorities that need protection and assurances of protection. In order to give them the necessary protection, we will need much more than this Resolution.

But it is quite possible that we cannot incorporate all those things in a resolution of this character. It is the spirit of the Resolution that has got to be taken into account; it is in that light that the Constitution has got to be formulated. And in framing that Constitution we will have to see that there is a charter of fundamental rights. We are agreed upon that, but that will not be enough. Several other countries also have had their charters of fundamental rights. Yet these fundamental rights have been neglected by their own Governments. Therefore we will have to stipulate certain provisions in our own Constitution, by which it will be possible for our masses to invoke the aid of the law as against the State, as against the Government and its incumbents from time to time in order to see that these fundamental rights are actually enforced. For instance, in France they had noble ideals of equality, fraternity and liberty, and they laid it down that no Member of Parliament could possibly be put in jail while the House was in session. Yet that right was denied. Several Deputies of the French Parliament were put in jail and there was no safeguard against it. In America, before the law all the people are equal, but yet you know how depressed are the Negroes in that country. We have to prevent a repetition of that sort of thing in our country. In order to be able to do that, we must enable our own workers, our own peasants, our own ordinary masses to demand from the State necessary financial assistance to go to the Courts, the Supreme Court of the country and to seek its protection. Poor men, as you know, are not able to go to Court, and when they have to fight against the State it is impossible for them to think of it at all. Just as you provide for a poor man's lawyer in criminal cases, so also if you were to make a similar provision for enforcement by the ordinary masses of the fundamental rights that we formulate, then there might be some safeguard.

The masses are the real minorities, and yet they are not asking for all these safeguards, and even when they ask for the safeguards they do not make it a condition precedent to constitutional progress. What is more, they care more for the country, for our own national progress and therefore, they not only say, let us go ahead, but they exhort us to go ahead. They stand by us, and I appeal to our own so-called religious minorities to take a lesson from these people. Whom are we supposed to represent? The ordinary masses of our country. And yet most of us do not belong to the masses themselves. We are of them, we wish to stand for them, but

the masses themselves are not able to come up to the Constitutional Assembly. It may take some time; in the meanwhile, we are here as their trustees, as their champions, and we are trying our best to speak for them. While we are doing this, our friends, the Muslim Leaguers, wish the rest of the world to believe that we are trying to do them some harm therefore they cannot hope to come over here, they cannot be expected to come over here. I wish to tell them from this forum, it would be the greatest possible tragedy not only for the Muslim masses but also for the masses of the country in general, if the Muslim League were to follow this policy of non-co-operation, this policy of do-nothing. What more can the Indian National Congress be expected to do in order to conciliate them than what it has already done? Our friends, the Muslim Leaguers, instead of trying to come to us and negotiate with us, reason with us or argue before us—they have gone over to the Britisher. They have tried to gain one after another a number of concessions. Each one of these concessions has come down as a sort of black curtain in blotting out the vista of freedom and Swaraj that this country is aiming at; and in addition they have done enough to embitter the people of this country. In spite of all this the Indian National Congress has chosen to accept all these various safeguards and rights and various other things that they have been gaining from the British with the only hope, with the only intention, with the only appeal to our Muslim League friends, to come over here and co-operate with us in the shaping of the Constitution for our country. If they do not come, are we going to stop where we are? Certainly not. They ought to know, and other people also who are backing them ought to know, that the Indian National Congress cannot be stampeded in this fashion. We are making history, we have been making history for the last 25 years. Again and again, in spite of our constitutionalists who have been telling us, ‘for God’s sake do not go against the law, these things will not get us Swaraj, you negotiate with the British, work with the British’, we have resorted to *saytagraha* on many an occasion in order to safeguard the rights and privileges of our people. We have made progress—who can deny that? Could we have been in this Constituent Assembly if we had not been able to launch direct struggles? Could there have been even this possibility for the Muslim League to try and obstruct as they are doing now, if it had not been for the sacrifice and struggle that we have been carrying on all these years? We have reached a stage when it is impossible for British imperialism to prevent us from making progress. British imperialism goes to the pitiable plight of trying to have some allies in order to arrest our progress—may be for a day, may be for a few minutes. But British Imperialism will not succeed and these allies of British Imperialism cannot succeed. What is more, our own masses will soon be in a position to set aside not only British imperialism but also their allies in this country and go ahead and help us to go ahead. What has been the position of the Muslim League itself? There was a time when Mr Jinnah used to say that independence was a sort of mirage, that it was absurd for India to claim independence for India. He himself said that direct action was an absurdity, and yet he has himself come to claim independence for India, he has declared himself in favour of independence. He has himself come to declare from the Muslim League rostrum the ‘Quit India’ slogan, though he would like to have it as ‘divide the country between us and quit India.’ Nevertheless, he followed in our own footsteps. He wants today two Constituent Assemblies, whereas not long ago he was not prepared to think of any Constituent Assembly at all. What does this show? I say, that if we go ahead, the Muslim Leaguers also are obliged to go ahead for the simple reason that the ordinary masses, whether Hindus or Muslims, to whichever community they belong, are impelling their political leaders, in spite of their own peculiar partisanship, to go ahead in the manner in which alone India can go ahead. Therefore, I appeal to our Muslim Leaguers, at least in the name of their

own masses, to come into this House and co-operate with us, if they are not for their own vested interests, for their Nawabs, or for their Jagirdars.

Mr Jinnah and others have been claiming in recent past that they are also as democratic as the Indian National Congress. If they are democratic, let them think over the fact as to which of the communities contains the largest number of poor people. Among the Hindus a good percentage are not poor, but among Muslims, the rich people can be counted on your fingers. The poorest among our people are the Muslim masses. They need most urgently a free India without which there is no chance for the Tribal people or for the *Harijans* or for the Muslim *Mazdoor* or the *Kisan*, and, the longer Mr Jinnah and others prolong this agony of slavery, the longer they will be delaying the possibility of their own masses making any progress.

Lastly, I wish to appeal to this House to see to it that the necessary provisions are made in the Constitution proper in order to enable our people to enjoy the various rights indicated in this Resolution. Without such provisions this Resolution will have become useless. It will only be a sort of pious hope and nothing more. It is true that, when it comes to be incorporated in our text-books and our boys and girls read them in their lessons, it will do a lot of educational work. But that will not be enough. Similar work was done in America and yet the ordinary rights of the people were set at naught by the Government. Therefore we should take care to incorporate the necessary sanctions in the Constitution in order to safeguard the interests of the masses and to ensure to them the necessary opportunities which are needed to enable them to enjoy these rights.

Dr P.K. Sen (Bihar: General): Mr President, Sir, I rise to accord my heartfelt support to the Resolution. A great many speakers have spoken before me during this session as well as in the last and a great many aspects have already been discussed fully. I do not wish to go over those aspects again or repeat any of their observations. But I do feel that this Resolution, in all its different branches, is very very necessary before we undertake to it down and frame a constitution for an Independent India. It is also important that we should proclaim, as the Resolution does, India an independent Sovereign Republic.

As the Hon'ble Member, who, spoke first today observed, there are many who may be regarded as doubters, waverers and scoffers. It is necessary, therefore, that we should proclaim to the world our determination to carry out our undertaking and frame a constitution for an Independent Sovereign Republic—a Republic in which the ultimate power is vested in the people and all power and authority are derived from the people. There can be no doubt at all today that all sections of people are agreed on this point. Whether we speak of our friends of the Muslim League or of the Congress or of the different 'minorities', so-called, or of the Untouchables—a word that I hate—or the suppressed, depressed to oppressed people—indeed, all are our brothers who have been put under Schedule Castes classes. Take any of these sections of political opinion,—is there any doubt whatsoever today that their common objective is Independence? Even the British Government, which is now prepared to transfer power, has definitely declared the objective as being Independence and Freedom. Under these circumstances it is incumbent upon us to frame our Resolution in these terms.

I remember some of the words with which the Hon'ble Mover introduced this Resolution,—they are ringing in my ears. He said: 'It is a resolve, an undertaking, a dedication...' Yes, it is a dedication. We have just come to the threshold of our work—we have not as yet crossed the threshold. We are, as it were, pilgrims gathered together in the vestibule and on the point of crossing the threshold to the temple. Now is the time and the moment for a vow of dedication and

self-consecration to the task which we have taken upon ourselves. A tremendous responsibility rests upon our shoulders and it is but meet and proper that, at this moment, before we have actually commenced the work, we should make a firm resolve in our mind to discharge our duty, as befits the worthy representatives, of framing a constitution for a free and independent sovereign republic.

There is another aspect of the matter which the Hon'ble Member touched upon and that I think is a very important one. What I have already spoken of is the subjective side of the Resolution, this is the objective side of it. We have to think not only of ourselves, but of those who are not here yet. Behind the 'visible We' are the 'invisible We'—our friends of the Muslim League, and the representatives of the States are yet to be ascertained. Even when they are here, when this House is fully constituted and is full to capacity, the 400 million people whom we represent will not be here. Therefore, I repeat, in the work that lies before us, we have always to be intensely conscious that this 'visible We' is not all that constitutes the Constituent Assembly, but that it has the 'invisible We' behind it. Then only shall we be able to frame a constitution which will really confer upon this nation at large, true freedom, true right of living as human beings—call it fundamental rights, call it rights of minorities, or call it what you like. It is only when we realize that we are framing a constitution for an Independent Indian Republic that, as we get along with the work, these problems will gradually clear up and we shall see with a clearer vision further problems that await solution. In all the work we cannot help feeling every moment the presence with us in spirit, of Mahatma Gandhi, that lone but luminous figure who carries on his shoulders the sorrows and afflictions which spring from narrow-mindedness, envy, jealousy, suspicion and distrust, between man and man, and community and community; but who carries in his heart the hope that springs eternal from faith in the Province that shapes our ends. There can be no doubt that in this Constituent Assembly is visible the hand of providence that shapes the destinies of this country, as of others. Inspired by that conscious hope and trust, I have no doubt this Resolution will be passed unanimously with our heart-felt support.

Sri S. Nagappa (Madras: General): Mr Chairman, Sir, I have great pleasure in supporting the Resolution moved by our Hon'ble Vice-President of the Interim Government, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. This is a resolution, Sir, that gives wide scope for all the communities and classes of this country. Sir, some of friends who were speaking prior to me have been pressing some sorrow for the sections that are not present here. I think Sir, that we should not have any sorrow for the people who are not present. Really speaking, they do not deserve to be here because they are not Indians. They are more Arabs than Indians; they are more Persians than Indians; they are more Turks than Indians. That is why they look towards foreign countries than towards the independence of this country. If they were really interested in the independence of this country, they would have been present here in this august body and helped the country to be free. Now, Sir, I think those of my friends who felt sorrow for them, can also vacate and go out, if they like. We, the Harijans and Adibasis are the real sons of the soil, and we have every right to frame the Constitution of this country. Even the so-called Caste Hindus who are not real Indians can go, if they want. (*Interruptions.*) Sir, today we are asking the Britisher to quit. For what reason? Is he not a human being? Has he not a right to live in the country? We ask him to quit because he is a foreigner. So, Sir, we have also a right to ask the Aryan, the migrator to go. We have a right to ask the Mohammedan, the invader, to go out of this country. There is only one consideration. The Caste Hindus of this country do not have any other place to go. That

is the only consideration that they deserve. Sir, now we are all Indians. Everyone of us must feel like that. With fellow feeling, we must all join together and help to see our country free as early as possible. None of us want to be slave to a third person or a second person. Everyone wants to be free. Now, Sir, this Resolution gives equal opportunities to all. Equal opportunities should not be in the statute book only. They must be translated into action. Every individual of this country must realize that he is the administrator of the country. He must be made to realize, he must be made to understand that he is the real ruler of this country.

Now, Sir, I need not dwell on the safeguards for the unfortunate children of the soil. Ever since we were defeated by the Aryans, we have been slaves of these people. We have been suffering, but we are prepared to suffer no more. We have realized our responsibilities. We know how to assert ourselves.

Now, Sir, much has been said by so many friends who spoke before me as regards the minorities. Well, Sir, I do not claim that we are a religious minority or a racial minority. I claim that we are a political minority. We are a minority because we were not recognized all these days and we were not given our due share in the administration of the country, but that cannot be forever. You know, Sir, what has been our position? This Resolution gives us a scope and a chance and an opportunity to be equal, to feel like equals and take our due share in the administration of the country.

Now, Sir, we are one-fifth of the population of the whole country. It is impossible for a democratic country to ignore one-fifth of its population. My friends who are outside this House, or who are not taking part in this august Assembly, it is for them to realize. Congress has gone too far in order to facilitate them. Even in accepting this Statement, I fear, Sir, we have been granting what all they have been asking. Our aim should not be simply because a particular section cries, we must be liberal and go on granting whatever they want. It looks as if you have been going on in order to placate a particular community or a section. You have been so tolerant, so liberal, even without caring for your own interest, you have been granting. Now, Sir, what I would request you is that you must be fair to all. If you give any weightage to any minority, that itself gives a scope and chance for other minorities to ask. At that rate I ask you is it possible for any majority to satisfy all such minorities? So I want you to be firm, to be strong, to be fair to all communities. Simply because one section asks, we should not go on granting. It has been said here—I am glad Panditji was kind enough to accept and include in the Resolution—safeguards shall be provided for minorities, Backward and Tribal Areas and Depressed and Backward Classes. This gives equal opportunity to all communities, irrespective of their races or religions. I do not understand, why a particular section should go on asking what is not due, and what is not fair. Simply because they ask, you have been granting. Now it gives an opportunity for the minorities to ask for more and more. What all is said is clear and the Resolution has been very carefully worded, and my only humble request will be to say that every word of it with all the spirit behind it, be translated into action. There is no use of simply passing a resolution and allowing it to be a resolution. The Resolution must find a place cent per cent in action. Only then it has the value of a resolution. It is said, 'Equality of status and of opportunity'. I must say, Sir, that equal opportunity means, one day or other, even a Harijan should be the Premier of India. That sort of opportunity must be there. Equal opportunity must be translated into action. That must be the motive. There is one more thing I would like to place before this Assembly, when I support this Resolution. The masses have been looking forward to this august body when they are shaping the destiny of 400 millions

and I hope, Sir, every letter, every word, that has been included in this Resolution, will be translated fully into action.

Mr Jagat Narain Lal (Bihar: General): Mr President, Sir, I consider it a great privilege to be called upon to accord my support to this Resolution. It is in the fitness of things that this memorable Resolution should have been moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. For it was he, at whose instance the Madras Congress, in the year 1926, passed the Resolution for complete independence. It was under his Presidentship, that, in the year 1929, the Congress adopted the complete independence of India as its creed. Again speaking in 1934, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said 'politically and nationally if it is granted, as it must be, that the people of India are to be the sole arbiters of India's fate and must therefore have full freedom to draw up their constitution, it follows that this can only be done by means of a constituent assembly elected on the widest franchise. Those who believe in independence have no other choice.' Therefore, Sir, this Resolution moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on this memorable occasion in the Constituent Assembly on behalf of this country has a particular value. I consider, Sir, this Resolution as a pledge and a solemn resolve on the part of each one of us sitting in this Assembly, and on the part of the country as a whole. Now since this Constituent Assembly has started its sittings and even before it started its sittings, we have noticed a certain amount of change in the mentality of the British Government. Well, we would like to say there have been several constitutions, evolved by Constituent Assemblies of different varieties in this century and in the previous centuries. It is for the British Government itself to choose what variety of Constituent Assembly it would like this Assembly to be and what variety of constitution it would like this Assembly to adopt. There is, for example, the instance of the United States of America, framing its constitution after the War of Independence, which was waged in the year 1774–75. That was a violent revolution, as we would like to call it. The Constitution that was framed after the War of Independence was one of those constitutions. Later on we find in the 19th century a number of constitutions being evolved by negotiation. In 1867 the Dominion of Canada became a Federation. It was through a peaceful negotiation that the Constitution of this Dominion was framed and evolved and accepted by the British Government. Again in 1900, the Australian Commonwealth was brought into being and that also by a constitution which was negotiated peacefully. We have another instance of the Union of South Africa. It became a Commonwealth in 1909 and that also through a constitution framed and accepted peacefully. The latest instance thereafter, is that of Ireland. In 1921 Ireland was asked to enter into a treaty with the British Government. That was after a guerilla warfare and after the Sinn Fein agitation, a prolonged agitation, and after the British Government had done all it could do, to bring about Ulster into being. The case of Ireland is the latest instance and is one which ought to be borne in mind by the British Government and by the present British Cabinet. The sores that are rankling in the minds of the Irishmen will remain fresh as ever and the result has been an alienation which has not yet ceased to exist. If India is to sit in this Constituent Assembly, and if India is to frame a constitution, I again repeat, it is for the British Government to decide whether that Constitution will be of the Irish model, whether that Constitution will be of the USA model or whether that Constitution will be evolved peacefully. Signs are that the British Government have not ceased to try the Ulster methods which they tried in Ireland and so many other countries. If they insist on pursuing those methods, the results will be of the Irish model. I will therefore repeat, I will therefore warn the British Government, that it will be better if it brought about all its methods of persuasion

and diplomacy into making this Constituent Assembly a success, by its own efforts combined with that of ours.

Well, Sir, I do not like to say much more at this late stage. I want again to repeat that I treat this Resolution as a pledge and as a solemn resolve to bring an independent India into being and that resolve is backed by sanction. The sanction is our own will and our own determination and the will and determination of the entire country which has sent us here. I hope, Sir, when the time comes, as it will, we shall see this Constituent Assembly evolving a constitution for a free and independent India which will come into being peacefully or if not peacefully, by any other method which the British Government choose or we find it necessary to adopt. I have not much more to say, Sir; I support this Resolution, and I hope that at the end, the amendment which was moved by Dr Jayakar, which has no more purpose in being left to stand now, will be withdrawn when the time comes for it.

Shri Algurai Shastri (United Provinces: General): Mr President, I am here to support the Resolution moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the beloved leader of our country. No Indian is more fortunate than those who have assembled in this House to frame the Constitution for a free and independent India. What more proud privilege can there be, for an Indian than to fashion the Constitution for his country in this House? Every Indian is eager to support the sentiments and words contained in the Resolution. The noble ideas and sentiments embodied in the Resolution have been the cherished desires of Indians for centuries. There was a day when our country was great, glorious and independent. For centuries India has been in bondage and the young men and women of this country and its old people have been struggling hard, with a burning desire to break the chains of slavery. At last the moment has come when we have assembled here today to declare our land free and independent as stated in the first para of this Resolution. Nothing can be more desirable today than the declaration of independence of our country. Here, we are not declaring India actually independent, but from a practical point of view, we announce that we are going to declare the land independent. It is our firm determination to declare it free and independent. It has been stated in the Resolution that the country, which we declare here independent, shall include all the territories unfortunately termed today as British India. British India is not India but India as a whole is India. I wish, not only the parts of India having at present British governance, but the territories, outside British India termed as Indian states, constituting separate units under paramountcy, should also be included in this great and free country and the Resolution declares so. The territories such as Pondicherry, Goa, Daman, and Diu, at present under foreign domination, also form parts of India. I wish these all together with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, which constitute our frontier, should also be included in this free land. Such is the conception of this Resolution. All the human ideals of ages—equality, fraternity and brotherhood—are embodied in this Resolution. In the eighth ‘Mandal’ of the ‘Rig Veda’ is a hymn which says:

All human beings are equal. The King should have the same regard for his subject that a mother has for her sons.

I am glad that all such higher ideals, we have been taught for ages, are enunciated in the Resolution and therefore I am here to support it.

The Resolution visualizes a State where there is no dearth of food and cloth and distribution is equitable. It embodies scientific socialistic ideals when it says ‘to each according to his needs and from each according to his capacity’. All the ideals of a State conceived in the ‘Bhagwat’

are embodied in the Resolution. It is the sacred duty of a State to provide its people with all their necessities, says the 'Bhagwat':

Annadeh Samvibhagah Prajanam Yathahitah.

The Resolution affirms the equality of men. We wish to eliminate all class distinction existing at present. The behaviour of men with one another should be on the basis of equality. The Resolution affirms this equality and hence I support it. The Resolution does not visualize the creation of a State which will remain isolated from the world and indifferent to its good and bad. But it says that this great land, independent according to its ancient principles, will fulfil its aspirations for advancement and prosperity. Our country and all its resources shall be used for the good of the world and we will have our relations with the world on the basis of the fundamental principle of human welfare and equality. We shall try to live up to the high human ideals enunciated in the 'Rig Veda'—*Devahitam Yadayuh*.

Our powerful, advanced and flourishing State shall not exist for its own welfare; rather it shall use all its resources for the welfare of the world. The Resolution places before us a very noble ideal. The most important feature of the Resolution is that it declares that the State we are going to create will have its complete independence of which it has been deprived. To preserve the independence thus regarded, we shall protect the State well. The determination embodied in the Resolution is consistent with the ancient high ideals enunciated in the 'Rigveda'—*Indrastwa Bhiraksatu*.

No State, even having gained its independence, can survive and protect itself if it is weak in military power. This truth is accepted in the Resolution and hence I support it. Only the State which has the backing of the people can enjoy a sure existence. When the Resolution promises social and economic equality to all, it visualizes a purely democratic State with the people's Government. In the Resolution we picture a State with power of legislation vested in the people and with no discrimination between the ruler and the ruled. According to the famous poet Kalidas, an ideal State, like a father, provides its people with protection, education and maintenance.

Only such a State can claim to be an ideal one where the present deplorable discrimination between the ruler and the ruled does not exist, where the people are not oppressed and exploited by the rulers. The people will imagine and desire a State which is based upon these high ideals of the 'Rigveda'. The Resolution before the House visualizes such a State and hence I support it. This Resolution enables us to show to the world that the independence we conceive is not to serve selfish ends and to rule the people against their will. We find all the Vedic ideals embodied in the Resolution. The noble ideals of state-protection and maintenance of subjects, held high during the Muslim regime, beginning from the reign of Hazrat Umar to Bahadur Shah, are embodied in this Resolution. When Muhammad Bin Qasim had conquered and occupied Sind he sent a letter to the then Caliph asking for his directions as to how he should rule the conquered people. The letter from the Caliph in reply is an important document and a treasure in History. The Caliph's directives, based on the ideals held by Hazrat Umar, said that he (Muhammad Bin Qasim) should treat the subjects with paternal feelings and protect their life, and property and places of worship. Humayun too, following these very ideals, taught his son Akbar to rule the people. In the *Ain-e-Akbari* by Akbar, where the relations between the ruler and the ruled are defined, we find nowhere that the people should be oppressed and deprived of their freedom. The former rulers acted on these ideals and we are here to revive them and the Resolution leads us to this noble task.

The Members from Madras follow us easily when we express ourselves in English, and the proceedings of the House also receive convenient publicity. But I thought I should here speak in Hindi. I hear the voices of the sons of Bahadur Shah, now lying in their graves, saying 'In what language are you expressing yourself? You are here to fulfil our desire cherished for centuries. Please express yourself in such a manner that we also may follow.' The spirits of Jayasi, Prithviraj and Sanyukta are eager to hear what we say in this House, they are eager to know what we are here for; they want to know your aspirations and ideals. We are here not to address the people of England but that of India. Numerous dynasties and empires are lying in the old tombs on all sides of Delhi. These tombs and the ashes therein ask us to tell them what we are here for. I want to tell them that we are here to go ahead in spite of all obstacles, with the ideals in defence for which the sons of Bahadur Shah laid down their lives, the Mutiny of 1857 was enacted and for which many old and young men and women of India have been sacrificing their lives for centuries. We are firm in our pious determination; nothing can daunt us; no power can bend us. The spirits of our ancestors resting in their graves are calling upon us to address them in their own language. This is their wish and this is why I have attempted to address you in Hindi.

The Resolution before you is acceptable from all points of view. Dr Jayakar had pleaded for its postponement and so far as the question of reconciliation is concerned we did so. Dr Ambedkar had also advised its postponement and agreeing to his pleas, we did postpone. But if anyone wants to stop us [by] his policy of obstructions, certainly we will not stop. The fight for freedom once begun, though baffled often, is ever won. We will march on and for the sake of reconciliation we will not give up the task we have undertaken. The waves of our ambitions and determination have risen and subsided; today they are immovable like a mountain and cannot be cowed down by the attacks of the British Imperialism.

Mr Shyama's amendment to this Resolution is a patch of hessian on this Kashmiri *pashmina*. His amendment and that of Dr Jayakar too, should be rejected and the Resolution, in its original form, should be passed.

Mr President: The meeting now adjourns till 11 a.m. tomorrow.

The Assembly adjourned till Eleven of the Clock, on Tuesday, the 21st January, 1947.

3. 'Excluded Areas Must Go'

National Herald, 20 January 1947.

New Delhi, 19 Jan.—'The Congress stands for the abolition of Excluded and Partially Excluded areas. It wants one administration for the country', declared Acharya Kripalani, Congress President, in the course of his inaugural address at the All-India Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas Conference held here today.

One of the evils of British rule in India, Acharya Kripalani added, has been the attempt to fossilize barriers and classifications among the people. The creation of excluded and semi-excluded areas has been brought about in pursuance of the divide and rule policy, although the reasons advanced for that by the British are anthropological.

The Congress, he pointed out had made it clear in its Faizpur and Haripura sessions that it stood for the abolition of excluded and semi-excluded areas. What it wanted was one administration for the country. The demand for special recognition and special protection for a group of people was a demand for perpetuation of distinctions which in the long run would prove detrimental to the country.

He advised the delegates to have confidence in Congress leadership instead of demanding separate representation in the advisory committee to be set up by the Constituent Assembly. Division in small watertight compartments would prove injurious at a time when there was a move to merge these areas in provinces so as to evolve one constitution for the general Indian population.

President's Plea

Mr Devendranath Samath, the president of the conference, also made a plea for the abolition of such classifications as Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas.

Such distinctions, he said, were introduced by the British Government with the ulterior motive of creating division and had not done any good to the people concerned. He hoped that the frame of the new constitution would bring these areas under the ordinary law of the land. He pleaded for adequate representation of Adibasis in the minorities committee of the Constituent Assembly.

He urged the Central and Provincial Governments to take adequate measures to uplift the tribal people economically, socially and politically.

Mr P. Kodandaramayya, chairman of the reception committee, said: 'I appeal to the members of the Constituent Assembly in the name of humanity to treat the tribal people on the same footing as others and thereby avoid the creation of another minority and another perpetual problem. Civilization and culture can be real only when they are not withheld from any one for the mere accident of birth in an area or community.'

Mr A.N. Sinha, Finance Minister of Bihar, said that the Bihar Government were doing their bit for the uplift of Adibasis and had sanctioned a sum of Rs 5,00,000 for their welfare. He emphasized the need for the spirit of selfless service.

Mr Rohini Chaudhry, MLA (Central), appealed to Adibasis of other provinces to help their brethren in Assam.

The conference adopted a number of resolutions demanding representation of the association on the advisory committee, opposing compulsory grouping, condemning immigration from Bengal into Assam, requesting the Constituent Assembly to abolish the principle of exclusion of any area from normal administration, advising the Constituent Assembly not to divide into sections immediately after the formation of the advisory committee without discussing and finally accepting their recommendations. The conference expressed sympathy with the victims of riots in Hazara.—API

4. Discussions on Objectives Resolution

Extract from Debate in the Constituent Assembly, 21 January 1947

Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. II, pp. 291–313

Sri K. Madhava Menon (Madras: General): Mr President, Sir I stand here to support the Resolution moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, I know, it does not require much more support from anybody, as very little opposition has been made to the proposition. It is absolutely necessary that we pass this Resolution without any further delay. As Sir Alladi pointed out in his speech, you may search the proceedings of any constituent assembly in vain to find that no such Resolution had been moved or passed before the other business of the Assembly began. We have already waited too long in this matter and I think we shall be failing in our duty if we

delay it any further. We must realize that the whole country is looking towards us with hope, as to what we are going to do for them. The only objection, if I can call it an objection, is the amendment moved by Dr Jayakar. In principle, Dr Jayakar's amendment does not differ much from the Resolution moved, except that Dr Jayakar wants us to wait, or if I may say so, give an opportunity for those who are absent here, to partake in the resolution. Dr Jayakar says that two of the partners are absent, one for reasons not known to us, the other being impossible for it to come here. It is fair that we should wait for them. He mentioned why not we wait till the 20th January, when we are meeting again. We have waited, Sir, as he wanted and we hope that he will have no reason to complain that his request has been disregarded by us.

The objection raised by Dr Jayakar that under the terms of 16 May Statement of the Cabinet Mission, we are precluded from passing a resolution like this at the preliminary meeting, is contradictory to his own resolution which says what the objects and aims of this Assembly should be. Dr Jayakar said that the fundamentals of the Constitution need not be mentioned here, and I do not think we have mentioned fundamentals of the Constitution here, but have only mentioned our objects and aims. He said—and I was rather surprised when he said it—that if the Muslim League will not come in, the States also will not come in, and Dr Jayakar mentioned or rather visualized, that if we passed this Resolution here before the Muslim League comes in, there will be a Hindustan, a Pakistan and a Rajasthan in this country. I felt that his imagination was running riot when he visualized the coming in of three 'sthans—Hindustan, Pakistan and Rajasthan. I am sure that no such contingency is going to come and no such contingency should frighten us from passing this Resolution. If we delay further on the ground that others are absent here, I am afraid we are only putting a premium on intransigence. I wish we will not do so but proceed with the resolution and pass it without further delay.

Mr B. Das (Orissa: General): Mr President, some of us were hesitating during the last session that this Resolution may be adjourned to a later date so that the absent ones can come; not that I was not whole-heartedly for the Resolution. As a Congressman and as an Indian, I concur whole-heartedly with the principles enunciated in the Resolution of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Not that it was not enunciated before, but at the beginning of our constitution-framing career we wanted that an enunciation of our goal and objectives should be made in this House, in which all the members of this House should take part. It is my sorrow, however, that the Muslim League, some of whom have been our co-workers in public life, are absent. At that time, foolishly some of us thought that they will come now and participate in the declaration of our national objectives and rights and at the same time take a willing share of the joys of the coming dawn of freedom. But that is not to be. One cannot understand how the members of the Muslim League, who are our friends, intimate friends, intimate associates and intimate co-operators in our life-time for the last twenty-thirty years, how they can abstain from coming in at this stage.

I cannot understand what they want. It is said that they want two nations; they want Pakistan. Mahatma Gandhi, the other day has said, let them have the Pakistan Provinces or a Pakistan country whereby we will know what is the greatest ideal of the Muslim nation, whereby they can show that a Pakistan country is a better governed country than the Hindustan or the Panthistan that the Sikhs want. What are our Muslim friends afraid of, and why is it that they are not here? Sir, there are three parties concerned, the British, the Muslim League and the Congress. The British government are the stumbling block in our way. Even the declaration of His Majesty's Government's further clarification of the Statement of the 16 May, by their statement of

6th December, shown that the British are not helping India to achieve independence. What is it that is obstructing our Muslim friends? Sir, the Qaid-e-Azam has been my political *guru* at the beginning of my career in the Legislative Assembly. I still admire him as a friend. But I cannot understand him as a leader of the party. I do not understand what he wants. There are members in the Working Committee of the Muslim League who are my personal friends, and friends of many of the people who are here. I cannot understand how Abdul Matin Chaudhury or Nawab Ismail Khan or Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan or Hussain Imam and others, cannot live with Hindus in Hindustan or in the Union of India as brothers. Unfortunately, I am sorry I find that most of the leaders of the Muslim League live in the so-called Hindustan. I have not yet found any Muslim Leaguer of the Pakistan Provinces of Bengal or Punjab who has got great political principles for the guidance of this country or the world, or has enunciated his principles. I am not here to point out the differences between the Congress and the Muslim League. I am here to appeal to the Muslim League from this forum that it is high time that they, who are our friends outside, should be friends in this House. If they differ from us on the point of Pakistan, let them give us their views. Let them tell us whether they want an independent Republic Pakistan or whether they want a Dominion Pakistan? What do they want? I want to appeal to my friends in the Muslim League to think of their old, old associations, the old neighbourly feelings and to come early to this House so that we can all take part in securing independence for India which is so dear to our hearts.

I have said nothing on the main Resolution because I agree with everything that is enunciated there. That has been our dream for these years. I conclude my speech again with an appeal to Mr Jinnah and my Muslim League friends to come and tell us where we are making a mistake, to tell the Hindus also where the Hindus are making a mistake and are not allowing Mr Jinnah to build up an independent nation. With that I conclude my remarks....

Rev Jerome D'Souza (Madras: General): Mr President, I wish to pay a warm and sincere tribute to the spirit which has animated this momentous Resolution of the Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Sir, it is the custom among all sections of our people to accept in an unquestioned manner the democratic creed as universally applicable to us. But I do not know, Sir, if people who make this verbal profession realize all the implications of it and are prepared to carry it out in every way in practical life to the extent to which such profession really does imply.

Sir, whatever may be the objections that may have been raised against this or that part of the Resolution, I take it as an adequate, as a careful, and as an entirely acceptable profession of the democratic creed, of the Government of the people, for the people, and by the people. I think, Sir, that if the spirit that animates it, continues to be applied to the details of the Constitution that this great Assembly will draw up, if it is applied in the daily administration of the Provinces and of the Centre, there will be no section of our people that will have reason to complain, and contentment is bound to follow.

Dr Ambedkar remarked in the course of his speech, that the ideological or the theoretical part of it contained an expression of opinion which is accepted by all, almost implying that it was something of a commonplace in political and journalistic thought. I am not sure, Sir, if that is quite true for any part of the world, and even if it were broadly true, there are occasions when these ordinarily accepted things need to be repeated and asserted solemnly and forcefully. It is said of a great European statesman, Talleyrand, that, when a certain sentiment was declared to be unnecessarily repeated, that 'it went without saying', he remarked that 'it would go all the better for being repeated, once again'. I take it, Sir, that on this solemn occasion, this profession

of our democratic belief is made in a solemn, public, and irrevocable manner. In this sense I believe that every section of our people will welcome the very carefully-weighed and poised manner in which these convictions have been expressed. No doubt, Sir, all this will require amplification, elucidation. Permit me, Sir, to draw the attention of this House to a double danger which, I think, it is necessary to be prepared against. On the one hand, in applying those principles of individual liberty, for which ample provision has been made in this preambulatory declaration, it will be difficult to resist, I say it will be difficult to resist from the very motive of love of country and the desire for rapid improvement and progress in our land, the desire to do things more by force and regimentation, more by the authority and power of the Central State, than by agreement, than by persuasion. It is a temptation to which many great men and lovers of their country have succumbed. But in the manner in which provision will be made to prevent such suppression of individual liberties, I hope and trust, that our great country may give an example of a consistent adhesion to those principles of agreement and consensus of opinion, and not overweight the power of the State in a manner as one of the previous speakers said, that will reduce the individual to a mere robot. That is one danger, Sir.

The other danger, undoubtedly present, is one which affects us as members of a minority community. The danger would be not that the minorities would have any of their special rights or necessary safeguards overridden by any mistaken sense of jealousy or opposition or lack of fairness; I do not think that the great majority communities of India or any of their most honoured representatives would be guilty of all that unfair overriding of privileges and safeguards; but by a genuine, though mistaken love of country and desire for unanimity and homogeneity, which it is not possible to have and which perhaps is not even necessary, they may try to pass measures which will seriously wound and grieve the minorities or special groups.

In the last session of this Assembly one speaker said, among things which were acceptable to every part of the House, used an expression in regard to minorities which I respectfully submit we could not possibly accept. It was said that no nation, no great people could prosper and survive with permanent minorities within, that, somehow or other, they have got to be 'absorbed', and he quoted the example of the United States as a country in which this process of absorption is taking place. I do understand, Sir, the sense in which this was said, namely, that there should be a certain degree of homogeneity and that there should be a common recognition of common interests and rights and that the State and the nation should be organized on the recognition of these common rights and interests. This is essential. But, Sir, 'absorption' in the sense of cultural or religious or any other absorption is something against which it is necessary for us to guard, and it is, I am sure, not the wish of the majority communities nor the sober reflecting opinion of this great house, that they should impose any thing on any minority, which would lead to such absorption. Sir, I wish the example of a country like Switzerland is borne in mind. Even in the United States, in spite of their common language and a universally accepted Constitution, linguistic minorities are permitted to develop the culture of their motherland, whether it be Germany or Italy or France. There remain still, in the great Commonwealth of Canada, two sections of people, Scottish and English on the one hand, and the ancient French community on the other, living in complete amity, following the customs and the spirit of their own motherlands and developing their own literature. One section of the Commonwealth of Canada finds it easy to co-operate and collaborate with the other sections and work for the glory and success of a country which is recognized to be a single nation. In Switzerland, three groups with three languages and with a difference of religion, sometimes sharply pronounced,

are maintained in a confederation which has known how to defend itself against the onslaught of envious people and has defended itself in no uncertain manner through centuries. I am sure, Sir, that the strength of this land will be based upon the strength of individual members of the different communities. And they will not achieve their full strength unless they base themselves upon convictions and ideals which are their very own. Cultural autonomy for which I am pleading and which has been promised as far as it is not inconsistent with national strength, even though it may appear in some sense as opposed to national unity, is still consistent with it. Undoubtedly there is a way of exaggerating these cultural peculiarities. I am sure that quite apart from subscribing to different beliefs, it is possible for members of all communities, Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Parsi, to accept the common heritage of this great land and secure that degree of uniformity, that degree of common agreement, on the basis of which national unity can be built up. I know, Sir, speaking for my own community, the Christian community, that there have been times when our countrymen looked upon this community and religion as being unduly associated with a culture that was not Indian, unduly identified with what has been called Europeanizing ways, but I should like to assure this great Assembly that it is not necessary, that it has not always been the case, that again and again people of my persuasion, whether they came from another land or whether they were from this land, have acted in complete conformity with the finest traditions of this country. On the opening day, Sir, the esteemed Vice-Chancellor of the Benares University, Dr S. Radhakrishnan, referred to the first Englishman who had come to this land, the Jesuit Thomas Stevens, and said that after him there came merchants and conquerors and that now we see the end of that 'invasion'. I should like to assure this House, Sir,—what I am sure, Sir S. Radhakrishnan knows—that the merchants, the traders and the conquerors had nothing to do with the Jesuit who preceded them. On the contrary, Sir, he came to India at a moment when there was no hospitality for him in his own land, from where he was banished under the threat of persecution. This great country offered him hospitality and he made this land his own, learnt its language and has written a book which Marathi scholars tell me is a classic, the 'Purana' of Thomas Stevens. It is in that spirit, Sir, that the adherents of that faith wish to come here and it is in that spirit that we wish to collaborate in the task of national reconstruction for the prosperity and the greatness of this land.

I should not like to take the time of the House much longer, but I cannot avoid saying something upon another point about which much has been said, but I hope to be able to say something about it, which may perhaps be a new point of view. Much has been said about the sovereignty of the people, about the possibility of that principle being inconsistent with the principle of monarchy, and about the dangers and difficulties which might arise therefrom. Sir, this doctrine of the sovereignty of the people is not a new doctrine. It is not a nineteenth century doctrine. The history of political thought in Europe shows that there was a struggle round about that doctrine in the sixteenth century when certain kings claimed the Divine Right of Government; and against them, it may interest this house to know, even conservative thinkers, thinkers who were monarchists, asserted the sovereignty of the people. St. Robert Billarmine and Suarez asserted this against James I of England, though they interpreted it in a different way from Rousseau, who in later times conceived that the power of the State came from the people by the pooling and the coalescing of all the rights of the people which they are imagined to surrender. But the State, Sir, is not a sort of undesirable excrescence resulting from the surrender of individual liberty. The State is a natural outcome of the nature of man who has to perfect himself in social and community life, with a necessary central authority. That

authority comes, as Sir S. Radhakrishnan stated, from the moral law and that is the basis upon which the rights of individuals and of the State have to be maintained. That ultimate authority, Sir, some would prefer to express it as coming from Almighty God as the author of nature and of all moral law. I cannot help expressing a regret, Sir, that the name of Almighty God finds no place in this momentous declaration. I understand, Sir, the reasons which moved the Hon'ble framer and mover of this Resolution in not bringing in anything which may look like a religious profession, but you will permit me, Sir, to say before concluding my remarks, that if by some way in this momentous preambulatory declaration the name of Almighty God had been brought in, it would have been in conformity with the persuasion, with the convictions, with the spirit of this vast land of ours and its ancient civilization. Sir, although it has not been brought up here, I do believe that the State ultimately receives from Him that sanction and approbation which gives it a certain sacredness. I am not pleading here for a doctrine by which the State is made divine. But I do mean that the subjects of the State, when they accept that State and are citizens of it, must obey it conscientiously, must feel that it is their duty to accept the authority of the Government of their land. Sir, we believe in Providence; we believe that the unfolding of History with all its vicissitudes still reveals a Providential design. Even though His sacred name is not here, I sincerely believe that we have met here under the covert of His protection and His Grace which alone moves the hearts of men. We hope and pray that the deliberations that we have begun with the solemn and preambulatory declaration will be taken to their legitimate conclusion by the same grace and that the land for which we are labouring will rise again with new strength, with new prosperity, with new happiness.

Mr H.J. Khandekar (CP and Berar: General): Mr President, I am here to support the Resolution moved by the Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. We are going to frame the Constitution for India today. The people of India and we sought for such an opportunity to frame it ourselves and I am glad the occasion has come now. When the Constitution for India is going to be framed by us, it should be drafted in our national language. It is our duty and in pursuance of this I am delivering my speech in Hindustani. I belong to a community which has been backward and depressed in India for many thousands of years. I am a Harijan and I shall place before you the voice of 90 millions of Harijans in India. The Harijan Community is accepting this Resolution with great pleasure for the sole reason that the Resolution embodies safeguards for all the minorities in India. Speaking against this Resolution and for Dr Jayakar's amendment, my friend, Dr Ambedkar, said that India should remain united and have a strong central government. He was not happy and satisfied with his recent visit to England. I am very pleased by the speech he has delivered on his return to India and I hope he will stick to it.

I hope, God grants him a little more good sense, he will give up the demand for separate electorates and also stop saying henceforth 'I am not a Hindu' which he has been telling up till now. I pray to God to give him good sense and I have hopes that He will.

If I describe to you the condition of Harijans, you will be moved. They have been and are still being subjected to endless oppressions and cruelties. We endured these cruelties with patience and never thought of abandoning our faith. We are Hindus, will remain Hindus and will secure our rights as Hindus. We will never say we are not Hindus. Undoubtedly we are Hindus and we will, as Hindus, fight the Hindus and secure our rights. We know that 90 per cent of the victims of the atrocities committed in Noakhali and East Bengal were Harijans. Their houses were burnt, their children were killed and women were molested. Above all, many thousands of Harijans had to submit to forcible conversion. If any community is given

any weightage more than in proportion to its numerical strength, certainly Harijans will also fight for weightage according to their numerical strength. What was done to the community which is backward and down-trodden today? I remind you of the Poona Pact. I place before you the example of my own province. In Central Provinces where we constitute 25 per cent of the population and we are entitled to twenty-eight seats, we are given only twenty seats in pursuance of the Poona Pact. Where have our eight seats gone? In my province our Muslim brethren form four per cent of the population. On the basis of their numerical strength in the Province, they are entitled to get six seats only. But I am sorry the eight seats of Harijans were taken away from them and given to Muslim brethren and thus they got fourteen seats instead of six. Harijans cannot tolerate such injustice. They should be given representation according to this numerical strength. May be, your census records shows the number of Harijans in India as 40 or 50 millions but I can emphatically say that our population is never less than that of Muslims. We are ninety millions and we should get representation according to our numerical strength.

One thing is wanting in the Resolution, and, if the mover agrees, it can be modified. The Resolution promises safeguards and rights to all the minorities. But unfortunately there are 10 million people in India who, without any fault on their part, are described as criminal tribes from their very birth. Hundreds of thousands of men and women in India were declared as criminal tribes according to the current law. To deprive them of their rights they are declared so. No matter whether they are criminals or not, from their very birth they are made criminals. Some provision to abolish this law must be embodied in this Resolution. I hope the mover will realize it and provide some safeguards for this Class in the Resolution.

The Congress has passed a resolution accepting the grouping clause in the Cabinet Mission Plan. Though a Congressman, I feel apprehension as to what would happen to the Depressed Classes in 'B' and 'C' groups. I have been thinking over it since the Congress accepted it. Though directly there is no Pakistan in Bengal today, still Harijans were subjected to great atrocities there. The members here, who have witnessed the happenings there, are greatly surprised. From the newspapers it appears that to the extent of ninety per cent it was the Harijans who were subjected to cruelties there. I am afraid no untouchable will remain alive in regions where Pakistan is established after the acceptance of the grouping clause. The Harijans of those regions, where the establishment of Pakistan is dreamt of, will have to accept either forced conversion or death. They are weak and are likely to be subjected to various atrocities and even at present people commit atrocities on them. Every community is increasing its strength to achieve its political demand. A day will come when because of the grouping provision our numerical strength will be weakened and that of other communities will be strengthened. And with the growth of their strength, no Harijan will exist in their provinces. Therefore, when considering this Resolution we must provide special safeguards for the Harijans of those provinces, where they are in such plight. It is in view of this fact that Dr Ambedkar has pleaded for a strong central government. If in Provincial Legislatures the Harijans are not given representation according to their numerical strength, the fears which we feel in the case of Bengal, and to which I have been an eye witness, will continue to remain. If we are given full representation in the Central Legislature, all such fears will vanish. I support the Resolution whole-heartedly and hope that all the members in the House will do their best to restore the rights, of which our backward community has been deprived for thousands of years. Wherever the question of allotting seats arose, we were given one or two seats. This is happening in the case of local bodies in many provinces. Many times we demanded representation according to our numerical strength.

But laws have been enacted merely to the effect, that if no Harijan is elected, one should be selected and if this is not possible, a nomination should be made.

Even where the Harijans form more than fifty per cent of the population, there also only one member from them is selected or nominated. It shows that the attention of the people has not yet been drawn towards us. Therefore whenever occasion arises attempt should be made to secure us representation according to our numerical strength. And then alone we can feel that you are doing something for us. If you want to satisfy us, by giving one or two seats, that will not do. The Harijan community is awakened now; it is politically conscious of its rights, to secure which, it will throw in its full strength. With these words I conclude my speech and hope you will pay due consideration to our rights and will not let us remain in the position in which we have been so long. With this hope I support the Resolution....

Dr H.C. Mookherjee (Bengal: General): Mr President, so far as my own community is concerned, I have always tried to adhere to the principle contained in that English proverb 'Little children should be seen and not heard'. On this particular occasion, I feel compelled to support the Resolution moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru because I submit it is absolutely essential that the world should know that behind this Resolution we not only have the great Indian parties but also small, minute minorities, religious and social groups to one of which I belong. That is the reason why I am standing here. Those who have preceded me have amplified in much detail everything that can be said upon the Resolution in question. What is of special interest to me, is to be found in the 5th and 6th paragraphs of the Resolution. These are the things which appeal to me, because I believe, that the leadership which has come hitherto from the Congress, will be retained by the Congress so long as it adheres to the principles laid down therein.

So far as other points are concerned, I am not immediately interested in them, but what strikes me with great grief, is the fact that difficulty should have arisen amongst ourselves and inside India. I shall not specify the different parties but it seems to me that so far as the difficulties of minorities, whether major or minor, are concerned, the difficulties are to be found as regards enjoyment of civic and political rights. These rights are fundamental and would be applicable to every social and religious group. So far as religious rights are concerned, we have freedom of worship. Every religion today is militant. Those days are gone when the Christian missionary, the Muslim *maulvi* or the Sikh *guru* could afford to make inroads upon the great Hindu majority community with impunity. Every religion is militant today and enjoys the power of converting people into its own fold. I do not see why we should be doubtful in this matter,—I am referring to the Christian group—about our rights in the matter of propaganda.

The Congress has been the spear-head of nationalism and so long as it looks to the progress of the country, I will not question it. It will not only gain the allegiance of the rest of India but also of the smallest of minorities including my own....

Mr S.H. Prater (Madras: General): Sir, in an earlier stage of the debate on this Resolution, a representative of my community supported an amendment of Dr Jayakar for the postponement of this Resolution. We now feel that such postponement is no longer valid or justifiable (*hear, hear*), and this House should proceed forthwith to accept and pass this Resolution.

This Resolution embodies what should be the objective of this Assembly—to create and establish a system of Government which will give India the status of an independent sovereign State. And in accepting this Resolution, this Assembly will be taking the first step in implementing this purpose, by declaring our will to vest India with complete control and

authority in her domestic affairs, and to vest her with complete independence of action in the field of international relationship.

The attainment of this independence will depend upon our solving for ourselves the problem of self-government. The terms of this Resolution lay down the basis of this solution. It is a resolution of compromise. Its terms fall completely within the Cabinet Mission's Proposals, which are designed to provide a *via media* between opposing claims of the Congress and the Muslim League. These proposals may be repugnant to this party or that. But the need of to-day is the need for men to recognize those truths which they most dislike and to sacrifice their several ideals to the common good. There are two truths which must be recognized, and those truths are embodied in the terms of this Resolution—one, that any constitution that we build up, must be based on provincial autonomy, and two, that there must be a union of all the autonomous States and Provinces. The history of India teaches that, from the time of the Mauryas down to the days of the British, India has remained a country of separate States, Kingdoms and Provinces with separate national identities, separate national cultures which engender and have always engendered strong local patriotism. It is not the communal differences of the hour, but it is these local patriotisms which have governed the political evolution of India, as we know it to-day. A strong unitary government, a confirmed policy of centralization which marked the earlier stages of British administration and rule, had to give way before these inexorable forces to decentralization, to the increasing devolution of power from the Centre to the provinces and to the increasing independence of provincial administration. Provincial autonomy came to us not as an extraneous proposition, it was directed by the peremptory need of a country, composed of various States and provinces, peopled by various races, whose cultural, economic and political needs could only be met by autonomous rule. The grant of provincial autonomy and residuary powers to the Province as envisaged in this Resolution meets this need. But if history teaches that provincial autonomy can be the only basis upon which we can build a new constitution, it equally proves that there must be a union of these provinces in a single State governed by a single central authority. Whenever such supreme power was absent to hold the balance between the various provinces, there was always struggle and strife, with its disastrous consequences to the country as a whole. It is only by a Union such as this Resolution envisages that we can secure mutual peace and common prosperity of the peoples of this country. It is only by such a Union that we can secure their integrity from foreign aggression. It is only by such a Union that the people of India can, as a group, become a dominant power in world politics. This Union, whatever the factors against it, will be established, because it arises from and is based on reality and truth. It is based on deep human needs. But if this Union of ours is not to be a mere geographical name, but a real union of the hearts and minds of men, it must be founded not on suspicion, not on the advantages that this political party or that may gain, but on a spirit of sympathy understanding and compromise which is the essence of true statesmanship.

And this brings me to the question of minorities. The Resolution advocates the fundamental rights of every citizen in this country. It also advocates the fullest protection to the minorities. This is a question which not only concerns the smaller minorities, it is a question which also concerns the major elements of the population, Hindus and Muslims, who may relapse into the position of minorities in various areas of the country. As such, the protection of minorities becomes the key to the framing of the whole Constitution, because if we are aiming at unity, such unity can only be achieved by measures which will give to the minorities in the Provinces and in the groups of Provinces the fullest protection for social, economic, religious and cultural needs.

Eventually, the whole question will depend upon the goodwill, sympathy and understanding of this Assembly. We are a sovereign body, but let us approach our task, not in the spirit of legislators moved by no emotion, but by a majority vote. Let us approach our task rather in the spirit of negotiators, who in every decision that we make seek to obtain the acceptance of those whom those decisions will most affect. Once we establish such a convention, I think our work will go smoothly. In this Assembly we have the means of reaching a common measure of agreement between all elements of this country. Let us by common effort, common endeavour, in a spirit of true compromise, endeavour to achieve the common good. (Cheers)....

Mr C.M. Poonacha (Coorg): Mr President, Sir, I wish to express myself whole-heartedly in support of the Resolution moved by the Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In doing so I have to draw the attention of the House to the discussions that have taken place outside this Assembly. There has been a sort of questioning of the competence of this Assembly so far as the passing of a resolution of this kind is concerned before addressing ourselves to the tasks ahead, I think, it is necessary for us to take up for consideration, a resolution setting out the objectives for which we are assembled here. For that purpose I do feel that our action in this respect is not contrary to what is already contained in the State Paper. We are by this Resolution, more or less, attempting to cross the t's and dot the i's of what is contained in the Statement of May 16, 1946. We are not doing anything beyond the limits of the framework of what is stated in the said State Paper.

So far as the other points are concerned, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact of the sovereign rights vesting with the people of India. Here seems to be some controversy going on as regards these sovereign rights, particularly in Indian States. They do not contest the fact that in British India sovereignty vests with the people of British India and when that is so, there can be no argument against the sovereignty of the people in the Indian States as well. It was a historical truism, Sir, that there are States with Rulers ruling over people, and also States administering rules without the Rules. But there cannot be Rulers without the people. Therefore, it conclusively proves that the sovereignty of the people is a recognized fact of human activities which is demonstrated not merely by a resolution of this type but from history which has proved all along that it is the people who own the State and who confer the administrative headship on Rulers and kings.

Much has been said, Sir, about minorities. Instead of claiming that we are a minority of so many millions or that we are a minority of so many crores, I would suggest that we should better consider about the many more millions that are yet to be born. We are not here purely for the purpose of drawing up a constitution for the present generation only. We are here for framing a constitution for the coming generations also. So, the task of framing a free-India constitution for ourselves, as well as for the coming generations, makes our duty all the more onerous. Therefore we will have to be more considerate, more responsible, more specific about our intentions. In doing so, it is within our competence, it is within our province, within our jurisdiction to set before us the objectives which we are working for. Not only to ourselves and to our poor millions, but also to the world, let us better state now, for what we stand and for what purpose we have assembled here. This Resolution clearly expresses our cherished intentions and, so, Sir, I whole-heartedly support this Resolution.

Shri Vishwambhar Dayal Tripathi (United Provinces: General): Mr President and friends: When we are going to frame the Constitution for our land, it is but natural that we should think on what basic principles our future constitution—the constitution for a free and independent

India—should be framed. Therefore I support the Resolution on the fundamental principles of the Constitution moved by the Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I want to draw your attention to some of the important clauses of the Resolution. Besides other things, basic principles are embodied in paras, 4 and 5 of the Resolution. As far as the basic principles embodied in the above-mentioned paragraphs are concerned, I am in complete agreement with them. But I would like to tell you that these principles are enunciated not only in our constitution but they are accepted by almost all the countries in their respective Constitutions. But in spite of the embodiment of these basic principles in the Constitutions of various countries, and despite the declaration by their politicians that their Constitutions would function according to them, we find that these principles are never practiced. If you go through the Constitutions of England, France, America and Netherlands or peruse the declarations made by their politicians and administrators, you will find that these principles, in some way or other, are accepted by them also. But in spite of this we find that these empires do not practise them. Throughout Asia, Indo-China, Java, Burma and India, we find that the European Imperialisms do not care to work according to these principles, though they are present in their respective Constitutions. Therefore, it is essential for us to consider in what way we can put them in practice. This is an important desideratum for us.

As I have said before, I want to draw your special attention to three paragraphs. In the 4th paragraph it is stated that we will frame a constitution for a sovereign and independent India, wherein all powers and authority are derived from the people. So far as this principle is concerned, it is very sound and every one will welcome it. But those who are students of politics know how these principles were misused in many countries. One of my friends just referred to the Constitution of England and said how the same had been misused there. Many centuries ago, the renowned politician of England, Mr Hobbes, had established the principle that all powers of State are derived from the people. But the monarchs of England misused this principle. The monarchs indeed accepted that all powers and authorities are derived from the people, but at the same time they told the world that once the people delegated the powers and authorities to the rulers, those powers no more remained with the people. The evil consequence of this we find in the theory of the 'Divine Right of Kings' in history. Therefore, it is very essential, that when we say 'all powers and authorities are derived from the people,' we must also make it clear that the same shall remain always vested in the people. And for this reason I attempted to put in an amendment to this effect. But for many reasons, the amendment could not be put in. Therefore, when we draft the Constitution later on, we must think over it and embody this in our Constitution.

So far as the 5th and 6th paragraphs are concerned, the principles embodied in them are very attractive and desirable. In some way or other, they are present in the Constitutions of almost all the countries, but they are never practised. And, therefore, we must consider well as to how we should translate these principles into action, and, when drafting the Constitution, we should pay particular attention to it. It is stated here, that the Constitution which will be drawn up and the State which will be established on the basis of that Constitution, will guarantee social, economic and political justice to all the people. No doubt it sounds very good. But you know that the body, which is vested with power and authority, interprets the term 'justice' in its own way. If, in our country, the power and authority tomorrow passes on to the capitalists, they will interpret the term 'social, economic and political justice' in their own way. But, if, in reality the power and authority are vested in the people, their representative will interpret it correctly. Therefore, it is necessary that we embody in the Constitution some such safeguards

that the body vested with the power and authority may not interpret these principles in their own arbitrary way. To achieve this and there is only one way and it is this. When we frame the Constitution, we should declare it beforehand that our Constitution shall not be framed, and the State created under that Constitution shall not be established on a capitalistic basis. If we do not do so now, the rulers may later on interpret these principles in their own arbitrary way and against the best interests of the people.

Much has been said before you about the Muslim League and Mr Jinnah and most of it is correct. But I would like to tell you that if before drawing up the Constitution, you declare that our Constitution shall be drawn up on socialistic lines, undoubtedly many of our Muslim brethren will be gladly willing to cooperate with us.

All the minorities, whether Muslims or Harijans, have doubts and fears in their hearts as to how the rulers would interpret these principles after the Constitution is drawn up. Therefore, if we are to remove their doubts and fears, we should declare it now, that our Constitution shall be framed, and the government to be created under the Constitution shall be formed, on a socialistic and positively not on a capitalistic basis. We should make this clear. For this reason, I had put in an amendment and had suggested that the word 'socialistic' should be added before 'India' in the Resolution. Again, I would say that if we want the principle embodied in the Resolution to be put into practice, the only way to secure this end is to draw up the Constitution on a socialistic basis. The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in his speech delivered in the beginning, referred to my amendment and said something. He clearly said that he wants to draw up the Constitution on socialistic lines later on and that he did not want any controversy to arise on the Resolution at this Stage. But I would submit with respect that there is no question of controversy. If really we mean to do some good to the people, if we want not only to remove the British rule but to build such a social and economic structure, whereby the people may get full opportunity for their advancement, it is very essential that we draw up our Constitution on socialistic lines. I think this will solve all the existing problems of minorities whether they be Muslims, Harijans or others. No doubt there are many among us who do not favour socialistic principles, but so far as the Congress is concerned, it has already accepted them. It declared in its election manifesto that it stands for the abolition of the zamindari system, and the nationalization of the key industries. Therefore, when the Congress has already accepted these principles, it becomes our duty to frame the Constitution on the basis of these very principles. Some may have objections to it, but I think ninety-nine or ninety-eight per cent of the people will have no objection at all. The public will be fully benefited when we accept socialistic ideals and draw up the Constitution on that basis.

I want to draw your attention to one more fundamental thing. When we are declaring our solemn resolve to establish an Independent Sovereign Republic State in our land we should also decide whether this Constituent Assembly is a sovereign body or not. If it has no sovereign rights, it cannot frame a constitution embodying sovereign rights. It has been said in the Resolution that this Constituent Assembly resolves to declare India an Independent Sovereign Republic. Under these circumstances, we should also declare by another resolution, that this Constituent Assembly is a sovereign body. The State Paper of May 16 has placed various limitations and restrictions on our functions. I need not go into details. All of you know it well. But I want to tell you one thing in this connection. We have assembled in this house, not because the Constituent Assembly owes its creation to the State Paper, but because it is the outcome of the sufferings and sacrifices of the country made during the last fifty or sixty years, and particularly during the last five or six years. The sufferings and sacrifices made by

the country have compelled the British politicians to form this Assembly and to speak of the transference of power to you. I want to make it perfectly clear to you that we have assembled here, not as a result of the State Paper, but as a result of the great agitation the country made during last five or six years.

This Constituent Assembly is the result of the movement of 1942 when the Congress passed the 'Quit India' Resolution, it is the result of the heroic deeds of the Indian National Army, the exploits of which are before us; it is the result of the heroic deeds of our respected great revolutionary leader, Shri Subhash Chandra Bose, who showed how we can organize and fight the big powers for the liberation of our land. Therefore, it is totally wrong to attribute the existence of this Assembly to the State Paper. This Assembly is the outcome of the work done by our country inside and outside the land within the last five or six years. I want to make it clear that it has derived its power and authority from the people and not from the British Parliament. Therefore, we should now declare that this Constituent Assembly is a Sovereign body. It has derived its power and authority from the people and not from the British Parliament and we are not prepared to accept any limitation that the British Parliament may unconstitutionally impose upon it. I hope, in order to translate the principles embodied in the Resolution into practice, we will adopt all such measures that may enable us to establish an independent State in our land. It is crystal clear that our Independent State shall be established on socialistic lines so that the poor people of our land may be fully benefited.

I do not want to take any more of your time and support the Resolution with these words...

5. Nehru's Speech on the Objectives Resolution and Its Adoption

Extract from Constituent Assembly Proceedings, 22 January 1947

Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. II, pp. 315–324.

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (United Provinces: General): *[English translation of Hindustani speech begins.] Mr President, six weeks have passed since I moved this Resolution. I had thought then that the resolution would be discussed and passed within two or three days, but later the House decided to postpone it in order to give time to others to think over it. The decision to postpone an important Resolution like this was probably not to the linking of others like me, but I did not doubt that the decision was sound and proper. The anxiety and impatience in our hearts was not for the passage of the Resolution, which was simply a symbol, but to attain the high aims which were enshrined in it. It is also our intense desire to march on with all others and reach our goal with millions of Indians. Therefore, it was advisable to postpone the Resolution and to afford ample opportunity not only to this House but also to the country in general to think over it. The sense of all amendments and specially the amendment moved by Dr Jayakar was generally for postponement. I am grateful to Dr Jayakar for the withdrawal of his amendment and I thank the others also who have withdrawn their amendments. Many members have spoken on the Resolution. Their number may be thirty or forty or more. Almost all of them have supported it without any criticism. Some of them, of course, have drawn our attention to some particular matters. I am of opinion that if a plebiscite of the crores of people of India is taken, all of them will be found to stand for the Resolution; though there might be some who would lay more or less emphasis on some particular aspect of the Resolution. The Resolution was meant to clothe in words the desire of crores of Indians and it was very

carefully worded so as to avoid any strongly controversial issue. There is no need to say a great deal about this but with your permission, I would like to draw your attention to some points. One of the reasons for the postponement of the Resolution was that we wished that our brothers, who had not come here, should be in a position to decide to come in. They have had a full month to consider the matter but I regret that they have not yet decided to come. However as I have already said at the outset, we will keep the door open for them and they will be welcomed up to the last moment, and we will give them and others, who have a right to come in, every opportunity for coming in. But it is clear that while the door remains open, our work cannot be held up. It has, therefore, become indispensable for us to proceed further and carry the resolution to its logical conclusion. I have hopes that even at this stage those, who are absent, would decide to come in.

Some of us, even though they are in agreement with this Resolution, were in favour of postponing some other business too so that the absentees might not find any obstacle in their way to come in. I am in sympathy with this suggestion but in spite of this I am at a loss to understand how this suggestion could be put forward. That is a question of waiting; not that of postponing the resolution. We have waited for six long weeks. This is no matter of weeks; ages have slipped by while we have been waiting. How long are we to wait now? Many of us who waited have since passed away and many are nearing the end of their lives. We have waited enough and now we cannot wait any longer. We are to further the work of the Assembly, speed up the pace and finish our work soon. You should bear in mind that this Assembly is not only to pass resolutions; I may point out that the Constitution, which we frame, is not an end by itself; but it would be only the basis for further work.

The first task of this Assembly is to free India through a new constitution to feed the starving people and cloth, the naked masses, and to give every Indian fullest opportunity to develop himself according to his capacity. This is certainly a great task. Look at India today. We are sitting here and there in despair in many places, and unrest in many cities. The atmosphere is surcharged with these quarrels and feuds which are called communal disturbances, and unfortunately we sometimes cannot avoid them. But at present the greatest and most important question in India is how to solve the problem of the poor and the starving. Wherever we turn, we are confronted with this problem. If we cannot solve this problem soon, all our paper constitutions will become useless and purposeless. Keeping this aspect in view, who could suggest to us to postpone and wait?

A point has been raised from one side that some ideas contained in the Resolution do not commend themselves to the Rulers of the States, because they conflict with the powers of the Princes. A suggestion has also been made to postpone the decision about the States in the absence of their representatives. It is a fact they are not present here but if we wait for them it is not possible for us to finish the work even at the end of the Constituent Assembly according to the plan. This is impossible. Our scheme was not that they should come in at the end. We invited them to come in at the beginning. If they come, they are welcome. Nobody is going to place any obstacles. If there is any hesitation, it is on their part only. A month ago you formed a Committee to get into touch with their representatives. We were always anxious to discuss with them although we did not get any opportunity for it. That is no fault of ours. We did not ask for time. We want to finish our work as early as possible. I am informed they complain of the following words contained in the Resolution.

‘Sovereignty belongs to the people and rests with the people’

That is to say, the final decision should rest with the people of the States. They object to this. It is certainly a surprising objection. It may not be very surprising if those people who have lived in an atmosphere of mediaevalism do not give up their cherished illusions, but in the modern age how can a man believe for a moment in the divine and despotic rights of a human being? I fail to understand how any Indian, whether he belongs to a State or to any other part of the country, could dare utter, such things. It is scandalous now to put forward an idea which originated in the world hundreds of years ago and was buried deep in the earth long before our present age. However, I would respectfully tell them to desist from saying such things. They are putting wrong thing [*sic*] before the world and by doing so they are lowering their own status and weakening their own position. At least this Assembly is not prepared to damage its very foundation and, if it does so, it will shake the very basis of our whole constitution.

We claim in this Resolution to frame a free and democratic Indian Republic. A question may be asked what relation will that Republic bear to other countries of the world? What would be its relations with England, the British Commonwealth and other countries? This Resolution means that we are completely free and are not included in any group except the Union of Nations which is now being formed in the world. The truth is that the world has totally changed. The meanings of words too are changing. Today any man who can think a little, will come to the conclusion that the only way to remove the doubts and dangers from the world, is to unite all the nations and ask them to work together and help each other. The organization of the United Nations is not free from big gaps and fissures. Thousands of difficulties lie ahead and a great deal of suspicion exists between countries. I have already said that we are not thinking in terms of isolating ourselves from the world. We will work in complete cooperation with other countries. It is not an easy thing to work in cooperation with England or the British Commonwealth, and yet we are prepared to do so. We will forget our old quarrels, strive to achieve our complete independence and stretch our hands of friendship to other countries, but that friendship shall in no case mar or weaken our freedom.

This is not a resolution of war; it is simply to put our legitimate rights before the world; and in doing so if we are challenged, we will not hesitate in accepting that challenge. But after all, this is resolution of goodwill and compromise, among the people of India, whatever their community or religion and with the different countries of the world including England and the British Commonwealth of Nations. The Resolution claims to be on friendly terms with all and it has been put before you with that motive and intention. I hope you will accept it.

A friend has suggested that it would be advisable to move the Resolution just on the eve of the Independence Day which is due to come after four days only. But I will ask him if it is proper to delay a proper thing even for a moment? Not a moment's postponement is advisable and we should finish our work as soon as possible.

This Resolution which has been put before you is in a new form and in a new shape, but I would like to tell you that it has a long trail of resolutions pledges and declarations including the world-famed resolutions of 'Independence' and 'Quit India' behind. It is high time to fulfil our pledges which we made from time to time. How are these pledges to be fulfilled? The right answer lies with you and I hope you will not only accept the Resolution but also fulfil it as you fulfil a solemn pledge.

One thing more I would like to tell you. We have been confronted and will again be confronted with various questions. Persons of various groups, communities, and interests would look at it from different points of view, and diverse questions and problems would be raised by them, but we should all bear in mind that we should not, on the eve of Independence,

allow ourselves to be carried away by petty matters. If India goes down, all will go down; if India thrives, all will thrive and if India lives, all will live including the parties, communities and groups.

With your permission I would like to say something in English also. *[English translation of Hindustani speech ends.]

Mr President, It was my proud privilege, Sir, six weeks ago, to move this Resolution before this Hon'ble House. I felt the weight and solemnity of that occasion. It was not a mere form of words that I placed before the House, carefully chosen as those words were. But those words and the Resolution represented something far more; they represented the depth of our being; they represented the agony and hopes of the nation coming at last to fruition. As I stood here on that occasion I felt the past crowding round me, and I felt also the future taking shape. We stood on the razor's edge of the present, and as I was speaking, I was addressing not only this Hon'ble House, but the millions of India, who were vastly interested in our work. And because I felt that we were coming to the end of an age, I had a sense of our forbears watching this undertaking of ours and possibly blessing it, if we moved aright, and the future, of which we became trustees, became almost a living thing, taking shape and moving before our eyes. It was a great responsibility to be trustees of the future, and it was some responsibility also to be inheritors of the great past of ours. And between that great past and the great future which we envisage, we stood on the edge of the present and the weight of that occasion, I have no doubt, impressed itself upon this Hon'ble House.

So, I placed this Resolution before the House, and I had hoped that it could be passed in a day or two and we could start our other work immediately. But after a long debate this House decided to postpone further consideration of this Resolution. May I confess that I was a little disappointed because I was impatient that we should go forward? I felt that we were not true to the pledges that we had taken by lingering on the road. It was a bad beginning that we should postpone even such an important Resolution about objectives. Would that imply that our future work would go along slowly and be postponed from time to time? Nevertheless. I have no doubt, that the decision this House took in its wisdom in postponing this Resolution, was a right decision, because we have always balanced two factors, one, the urgent necessity in reaching our goal, and the other, that we should reach it in proper time and with as great a unanimity as possible. It was right, therefore, if I may say with all respect, that this House decided to adjourn consideration of this Motion and thus not only demonstrated before the world our earnest desire to have all those people here who have not so far come in here, but also to assure the country and every one else, how anxious we were to have the cooperation of all. Since then six weeks have passed, and during these weeks there has been plenty of opportunity for those, who wanted to come, to come. Unfortunately, they have not yet decided to come and they still hover in this state of indecision. I regret that, and all I can say is this, that we shall welcome them at any future time when they may wish to come. But it should be made clear without any possibility of misunderstanding that no work will be held up in future, whether any one comes or not. (*Cheers.*) There has been waiting enough. Not only waiting six weeks, but many in this country have waited for years and years, and the country has waited for some generations now. How long are we to wait? And if we, some of us, who are more prosperous can afford to wait, what about the waiting of the hungry and the starving? This Resolution will not feed the hungry or the starving, but it brings a promise of many things—it brings the promise of freedom, it brings the promise of food and opportunity for all. Therefore, the sooner we set about it the better. So we waited for six weeks, and during these six weeks the country thought

about it, pondered over it, and other countries also, and other people who are interested have thought about it. Now we have come back here to take up the further consideration of this Resolution. We have had a long debate and we stand on the verge of passing it. I am grateful to Dr Jayakar and Mr Sahaya for having withdrawn their amendments. Dr Jayakar's purpose was served by the postponing of this Resolution, and it appears now that there is no one in this House who does not accept fully this Resolution as it is. It may be, some would like it to be slightly differently worded or the emphasis placed more on this part or on that part. But taking it as a whole, it is a resolution which has already received the full assent of this House, and there is little doubt that it has received the full assent of the country. (*Cheers.*)

There have been some criticisms of it, notably, from some of the Princes. Their first criticism has been that such a Resolution should not be passed in the absence of the representatives of the States. In part I agree with that criticism, that is to say, I should have liked all the States being properly represented here, the whole of India—every part of India being properly represented here—when we pass this Resolution. But if they are not here it is not our fault. It is largely the fault of the Scheme under which we are functioning, and we have this choice before us. Are we to postpone our functioning because some people cannot be here? That would be a dreadful thing if we stopped not only this Resolution, but possibly so much else, because representatives of the States are not here. So far as we are concerned, they can come in at the earliest possible moment, we will welcome them if they send proper representatives of the States. So far as we are concerned, even during the last six weeks or a month, we have made some effort to get into touch with the Committee representing the States Rulers to find a way for their proper representation here. It is not our fault that there has been any delay. We are anxious to get every one in, whether it is the representatives of the Muslim League or the States or any one else. We shall continue to persevere in this endeavour so that this House may be as fully representative of the country as it is possible to be. So, we cannot postpone this Resolution or anything else because some people are not here.

Another point has been raised: the idea of the sovereignty of the people, which is enshrined in this Resolution, does not commend itself to certain rulers of Indian States. That is a surprising objection and, if I may say so, if that objection is raised in all seriousness by anybody, be he a Ruler or a Minister, it is enough to condemn the Indian States system of every Ruler or Minister that exists in India. It is a scandalous thing for any man to say, however highly placed he may be, that he is here by special divine dispensation to rule over human beings today. That is a thing which is an intolerable presumption on any man's part, and it is a thing which this House will never allow and will repudiate if it is put before it. We have heard a lot about this Divine Right of Kings we had read a lot about of it in past histories and we had thought that we had heard the last of it and that it had been put an end to and buried deep down into the earth long ages ago. If any individual in India or elsewhere raises it today, he would be doing so without any relation to the present in India. So, I would suggest to such persons in all seriousness that, if they want to be respected or considered with any measure of friendliness, no such idea should be even hinted at, much less said. On this there is going to be no compromise. (*Hear, hear.*)

But, as I made plain on the previous occasion when I spoke, this Resolution makes it clear that we are not interfering in the internal affairs of the States. I even said that we are not interfering with the system of monarchy in the States, if the people of the States so want it. I gave the example of the Irish Republic in the British Commonwealth and it is conceivable to me that within the Indian Republic, there might be monarchies if the people so desire. That is

entirely for them to determine. This Resolution and, presumably, the Constitution that we make, will not interfere with that matter. Inevitably it will be necessary to bring about uniformity in the freedom of the various parts of India, because it is inconceivable to me that certain parts of India should have democratic freedom and certain others should be denied it. That cannot be. That will give rise to trouble, just as in the wide world today there is trouble because some countries are free and some are not. Much more trouble will there be if there is freedom in parts of India and lack of freedom in other parts of India.

But we are not laying down in this Resolution any strict system in regard to the governance of the Indian States. All that we say is this that they, or such of them, as are big enough to form unions or group themselves into small unions, will be autonomous units with a very large measure of freedom to do as they choose, subject no doubt to certain central functions in which they will co-operate with the Centre, in which they will be represented in the Centre and in which the Centre will have control. So that, in a sense, this Resolution does not interfere with the inner working of those Units. They will be autonomous and, as I have said, if those Units choose to have some kind of constitutional monarchy at their head, they would be welcome to do so. For my part, I am for a Republic in India as anywhere else. But whatever my views may be on that subject, it is not my desire to impose my will on others; whatever the views of this House may be on this subject, I imagine that it is not the desire of this House to impose its will in these matters.

So, the objection of the Ruler of an Indian State to this Resolution becomes an objection, in theory, to the theoretical implications and the practical implications of the doctrine of sovereignty of the people. To nothing else does any one object. That is an objection which cannot stand for an instant. We claim in this Resolution to frame a constitution for a Sovereign, Independent, Indian Republic—necessarily Republic. What else can we have in India? Whatever the States may have or may not have, it is impossible and inconceivable and undesirable to think in any other terms, but in terms of the Republic in India.

Now, what relation will that Republic bear to the other countries of the world, to England and to the British Commonwealth and the rest? For a long time past we have taken a pledge on Independence Day that India must sever her connection with Great Britain, because that connection had become an emblem of British domination. At no time have we thought in terms of isolating ourselves in this part of the world from other countries or of being hostile to countries which have dominated over us. On the eve of this great occasion, when we stand on the threshold of freedom we do not wish to carry a trail of hostility with us against any other country. We want to be friendly to all. We want to be friendly with the British people and the British Commonwealth of Nations.

But what I would like this House to consider is this: When these words and these labels are fast changing their meaning and in the world today there is no isolation, you cannot live apart from the others. You must co-operate or you must fight. There is no middle way. We wish for peace. We do not want to fight any nation if we can help it. The only possible real objective that we, in common with other nations, can have is the objective of co-operating in building up some kind of world structure, call it 'One World', call it what you like. The beginnings of this world structure have been laid down in the United Nations Organization. It is feeble yet; it has many defects; nevertheless, it is the beginning of the world structure. And India has pledged herself to cooperate in that work.

Now, if we think of that structure and our co-operation with other countries in achieving it, where does the question come of our being tied up with this Group of Nations or that

Group? Indeed, the more groups and blocks are formed, the weaker will that great structure become.

Therefore, in order to strengthen that big structure, it is desirable for all countries not to insist, not to lay stress on separate groups and separate blocks. I know that there are such separate groups and blocks today and because they exist today, there is hostility between them, and there is even talk of war among them. I do not know what the future will bring to us, whether peace or war. We stand on the edge of a precipice and there are various forces which pull us on one side in favour of co-operation and peace, and on the other, push us towards the precipice of war and disintegration. I am not prophet enough to know what will happen, but I do know that those who desire peace must deprecate separate blocks which necessarily become hostile to other blocks. Therefore India, in so far as it has a foreign policy, has declared that it wants to remain independent and free of all these blocks and that it wants to cooperate on equal terms with all countries. It is a difficult position because, when people are full of fear of each other, any person who tries to be neutral is suspected of sympathy—with the other party. We can see that in India and we can see that in the wider sphere of world politics. Recently an American statesman criticized India in words which show how lacking in knowledge and understanding even the statesmen of America are. Because we follow our own policy, this group of nations thinks that we are siding with the other and that group of nations thinks that we are siding with this. That is bound to happen. If we seek to be a free, independent, democratic republic, it is not to dissociate ourselves from other countries, but rather as a free nation to co-operate in the fullest measure with other countries for peace and freedom, to cooperate with Britain, with the British Commonwealth of Nations, with the United States of America, with the Soviet Union, and with all other countries, big and small. But real co-operation would only come between us and these other nations when we know that we are free to cooperate and are not imposed upon and forced to co-operate. So long as there is the slightest trace of compulsion, there can be no co-operation.

Therefore, I commend this Resolution to the House and I commend this Resolution, if I may say so, not only to this House but to the world at large so that it can be perfectly clear that it is a gesture of friendship to all, and, that behind it there lies no hostility. We have suffered enough in the past. We have struggled sufficiently, we may have to struggle again, but under the leadership of a very great personality we have sought always to think in terms of friendship and goodwill towards others, even those who opposed us. How far we have succeeded, we do not know, because we are weak human beings. Nevertheless, the impress of that message has found a place in the hearts of millions of people of this country, and even when we err and go astray, we cannot forget it. Some of us may be little men, some may be big, but whether we are small men or big, for the moment we represent a great cause and therefore something of the shadow of greatness falls upon us. Today in this Assembly we represent a mighty cause and this Resolution that I have placed before you gives some semblance of that cause. We shall pass this Resolution, and I hope that this Resolution will lead us to a constitution on the lines suggested by this Resolution. I trust that the Constitution itself will lead us to the real freedom that we have clamoured for and that real freedom in turn will bring food to our starving peoples, clothing for them, housing for them and all manner of opportunities of progress, that it will lead also to the freedom of the other countries of Asia, because in a sense, however unworthy we have become—let us recognize it—the leaders of the freedom movement of Asia, and whatever we do, we should think of ourselves in these larger terms. When some petty matter divides us and we have difficulties and conflicts amongst ourselves over these small matters, let us remember

not only this Resolution, but this great responsibility that we shoulder, the responsibility of the freedom of 400 million people of India, the responsibility of the leadership of a large part of Asia, the responsibility of being some kind of guide to vast numbers of people all over the world. It is a tremendous responsibility. If we remember it, perhaps we may not bicker so much over this seat or that post, over some small gain for this group or that. The one thing that should be obvious to all of us is this that there is no group in India, no party, no religious community, which can prosper if India does not prosper. If India goes down, we go down, all of us, whether we have a few seats more or less, whether we get a slight advantage or we do not. But if it is well with India, if India lives as a vital free country, then it is well with all of us to whatever community or religion we might belong.

We shall frame the Constitution, and I hope it will be a good constitution, but does anyone in this House imagine that, when a free India emerges, it will be bound down by anything that even this House might lay down for it? A free India will see the bursting forth of the energy of a mighty nation. What it will do and what it will not, I do not know, [...] that it will not consent to be bound down by anything. Some people imagine that what we do now, may not be touched for 10 years or 20 years, if we do not do it today, we will not be able to do it later. That seems to me a complete misapprehension. I am not placing before the House what I want done and what I do not want done, but I should like the House to consider that we are on the eve of revolutionary changes, revolutionary in every sense of the word, because when the spirit of a nation breaks its bonds, it functions in peculiar ways and it should function in strange ways. It may be that the Constitution, this House may frame, may not satisfy that free India. This House cannot bind down the next generation, or the people who will duly succeed us in this task. Therefore, let us not trouble ourselves too much about the petty details of what we do, those details will not survive for long, if they are achieved in conflict. What we achieve in unanimity, what we achieve by co-operation is likely to survive. What we gain here and there by conflict and by overbearing manners and by threats will not survive long. It will only leave a trail of bad blood. And so now I commend this Resolution to the House and may I read the last para of this Resolution? But one word more, Sir, before I read it. India is a great country, great in her resources, great in her man-power, great in her potential, in every way. I have little doubt that a Free India on every plane will play a big part on the world stage, even on the narrowest plane of material power, and I should like India to play that great part in that plane. Nevertheless today there is a conflict in the world between forces in different planes. We hear a lot about the atom bomb and the various kinds of energy that it represents and in essence today there is a conflict in the world between two things, that atom bomb and what it represents and the spirit of humanity. I hope that while India will no doubt play a great part in all the material spheres, she will always lay stress on that spirit of humanity, and I have no doubt in my mind, that ultimately in this conflict, that is confronting the world, the human spirit will prevail over the atom bomb. May this Resolution bear fruit and may the time come when in the words of this Resolution, this ancient land attains its rightful and honoured place in the world and makes its full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind.

Mr President: The time has now arrived when you should give your solemn votes on this Resolution. Remembering the solemnity of the occasion and the greatness of the pledge and the promise which this Resolution contains, I hope every Member will stand up in his place when giving his vote in favour of it.

I will read the Resolution:

This Constituent Assembly declares its firm and solemn resolve to proclaim India as an Independent Sovereign Republic and to draw up for her future governance a Constitution:

(2) WHEREIN the territories that now comprise British India, the territories that now form the Indian States, and such other parts of India as are outside British India and the States as well as such other territories as are willing to be constituted into the Independent Sovereign India shall be a Union of them all; and

(3) WHEREIN the said territories, whether with their present boundaries or with such others as may be determined by the Constituent Assembly and thereafter according to law of the Constitution shall possess and retain the status of autonomous units, together with residuary powers, and exercise all powers and functions of government and administration, save and except such powers and functions as are vested in or assigned to the Union, or as are inherent or implied in the Union or resulting therefrom; and

(4) WHEREIN all power and authority of the Sovereign Independent India, its constituent parts and organs of government, are derived from the people; and

(5) WHEREIN shall be guaranteed and secured to all the people of India justice, social, economic, and political; equality of status, of opportunity, and before the law; freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action, subject to law and public morality; and

(6) WHEREIN adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities, backward and tribal areas, and depressed and other backward classes; and

(7) WHEREBY shall be maintained the integrity of the territory of the Republic and its sovereign rights on land, sea and air according to justice and the law of civilised nations; and

(8) this ancient land attain its rightful and honoured place in the world—and make its full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind.

(The Hon'ble the President then read a Hindi translation of the Resolution.)

I have got the Urdu translation also. Unfortunately I am not able to read it. I shall be glad if some other Member could read it for me.

(Shri Mohanlal Saksena then read the Urdu translation of the Resolution.)

Mr President: I will request Members now to stand in their places and vote in favour of this Resolution.

The Resolution was adopted, all members standing.

6. 'Proceedings Leave No Chance for Compromise'

Dawn, 23 January 1947.

Quetta, Wednesday.—The following statement has been issued to the Press by Choudhri Mohammad Amin, Member, All-India Muslim League Council from Baluchistan:

'The way in which the Constituent Assembly is proceeding with its work, clearly shows that the Congress has no desire that the Muslim League should get in.

'Its President Dr Rajendra Prasad has tried in his statement before the House on 20 January, to prove the representative character of that Body.

'According to him, with the exception of Muslim League, all other parties are fully represented and are taking part in the work. Knowing fully well the fact that the Muslim

League represents the entire Muslim Nation after Congress, the only other major party in India is Muslim League, without whose co-operation their efforts cannot be crowned with success, Dr Rajendra Prasad in his statement, has tried to treat the Muslim League as if it was a part whose cooperation according to him was not very necessary.

‘On the other side, Mr Gandhi is instigating Congress leaders in Assam, the Sikhs of the Punjab and Khan Brothers of the NWFP, in order to torpedo the Grouping Scheme by every means in his power.

‘The Congressmen have never showed a spirit of real co-operation towards Muslims. Had they any genuine desire to do so, they should have like good brothers, postponed the work of the Constituent Assembly in order to give time to the Muslim League to review its previous resolution of boycotting the Constituent Assembly.

‘The present state of affairs hardly shows anything encouraging so far as the Muslims are concerned. With a handful of Muslims, whose number could be counted on fingers the Congress is still clinging to the false idea that it represents the whole of India.

The speeches being made from day to day by top-ranking Congress leaders including Mr Gandhi and the way in which they are hurrying up with the work of the Constituent Assembly is leaving no chance of any peaceful settlement between the two major parties’.

7. Constitution of the Advisory Committee

Extract from the Constituent Assembly Proceedings, 24 January 1947

Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. II, pp. 328–49.

Election of the Advisory Committee

The Hon’ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant: Sir, I beg to leave to make the motion standing in my name which runs thus:

‘This Assembly resolves that in pursuance of paragraph 20 of the Cabinet Mission’s Statement of 16 May, 1946, an Advisory Committee be constituted as hereinafter set out:—

1. (a) The Advisory Committee shall consist of not more than 68 members who may include persons who are not members of the Assembly.
- (b) (i) It shall consist initially of 52 members who shall be elected by the Assembly in accordance with the principle of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.
- (ii) The Assembly may elect in such manner as the President may deem appropriate up to 7 members.
- (c) The President may at any one time or at different times nominate members to the Committee not exceeding 9.
2. The Advisory Committee shall appoint Sub-Committees to prepare schemes for the Administration of the North-Western Tribal Areas, the North-Eastern Tribal Areas and the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas. Each of such Sub-Committees may co-opt not more than 2 members from the particular tribal territory under its considerations for the time being, to assist it in its work in relation to that territory.
3. The Advisory Committee may appoint other Sub-Committees from time to time as it may deem necessary.

4. The Advisory Committee shall submit the final reports to the Union Constituent Assembly within three months and may submit interim reports from time to time.
5. Casual vacancies in the Advisory Committee shall be filled as soon as possible after they occur in the manner in which the seat in respect of which the vacancy had arisen was originally filled.
6. The President may make standing orders for the conduct of the proceedings of the Committee.'...

I have tried to give a factual narrative and analysis and a certain degree of elucidation of the Resolution that is under consideration. With the permission of Hon'ble Members and the President, I should like to make a few remarks of a general character. The question of minorities everywhere looms large in constitutional discussions. Many a constitution has foundered on this rock. A satisfactory solution of questions pertaining to minorities will ensure the health, vitality and strength of the free State of India that will come into existence as a result of our discussions here. The question of minorities cannot possibly be overrated. It has been used so far for creating strife, distrust and cleavage between the different sections of the Indian nation. Imperialism thrives on such strife. It is interested in fomenting such tendencies. So far, the minorities have been incited and have been influenced in a manner which has hampered the growth of cohesion and unity. But now it is necessary that a new chapter should start and we should all realize our responsibility. Unless the minorities are fully satisfied, we cannot make progress; we cannot even maintain peace in an undisturbed manner. So, all that can possibly be done should be done. We should have, in fact, proposed a Committee of this type, even if there had been no mention of it in the Statement of 16th May. If Hon'ble Members will refer to the Objectives Resolution which was passed unanimously by this House, they will find these words in Clauses (5) and (6):

Wherein shall be guaranteed and secured to all the people of India justice, social, economic, and political; equality of status, of opportunity, and before the law; freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action, subject to law and public morality; and wherein adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities, Backward and Tribal Areas, and Depressed and other Backward Classes.

So, the House has already accepted the fundamentals of this Resolution and it has done so unanimously. It is a matter which should hearten the minorities. The essence of these rights has already been conceded and conceded voluntarily and unanimously by all the Members of this House. I hope every effort will be made in this Advisory Committee to reach decisions that will fully satisfy the minorities. Hon'ble Members may be aware, and if they are not, I believe I will not be disclosing a secret when I tell them, that the entire strength of this Committee has been fixed in accordance with the wishes of one and each of every one of all the minorities in this House. It represents their complete agreement. We have subordinated every other consideration in order to secure contentment and satisfaction. The task of constitution making is a practical one and we should not be lost in the doctrinaire maze; we should look at problems from a realistic point of view and see that the decisions that we take are not only just, but are also regarded as just by those affected thereby. We trust that in this Committee every regard will be paid to the wishes of the different minorities and the decisions taken will be fully satisfactory to them.

In this connection, I should also like to remind the minorities of some of the historical developments of recent years. As Hon'ble Members may be aware, after the termination

of the first World War, a number of States were set up, especially in Eastern Europe and provisions for the protection of minorities were incorporated in the Constitutions of these States such as Czechoslovakia, Austria, Bulgaria, Poland and others. Not only were such provisions incorporated in the Constitutions, but they formed part of solemn stipulations in the treaties entered into between the Associated and Allied powers, as they are called, and these new States that were then brought into existence. Guarantees were given by the Allied and Associated Powers to the minorities in these various States. Declarations were also made at International Conferences and by the League of Nations. They were assured by outside authorities and guarantees were given by treaties entered into by them with these Associated Powers. But, what was the result. No minority had been the victim of greater and more ruthless tyranny and oppression, atrocities and brutalities than the minorities that lived in these States and some of them have perhaps completely faded away and disappeared since. Let not the minorities look to any outside power for the protection of their rights. This will never help them. Let not the lesson of history be lost. It is a lesson which should be burnt deep in the hearts and minds of all minorities that they can find their protection only from the people in whose midst they live and it is on the establishment of mutual goodwill, mutual trust, cordiality and amity that the rights and interests not only of the majorities but also of the minorities depend. This lesson of history, I hope, will not be forgotten.

It is not for me to attempt any dissertation on the various aspects of minorities or fundamental rights. I cannot however refrain from referring to a morbid tendency which has gripped this country for the last many years. The individual citizen who is really the backbone of the State, the pivot, the cardinal centre of all social activity, and whose happiness and satisfaction should be the goal of every social mechanism, has been lost here in that indiscriminate body known as the community. We have even forgotten that a citizen exists as such. There is the unwholesome, and to some extent a degrading habit of thinking always in terms of communities and never in terms of citizens. (*Cheers.*) But it is after all citizens that form communities and the individual as such is essentially the core of all mechanisms and means and devices that are adopted for securing progress and advancement. It is the welfare and happiness of the individual citizen which is the object of every sound administrator and statesman. So let us remember that it is the citizen that must count. It is the citizen that forms the base as well as the summit of the social pyramid and his importance, his dignity and his sanctity, should always be remembered. If you bear this in mind, I think we shall understand and appreciate the importance of the fundamental right. Because, on the proper appreciation of these rights has depended the progress of humanity. The Atlantic Charter with its Four Freedoms, the Charter of rights of men from the time of Paine and Wells to that of the Declaration made last year represent the noble advance in the history of human race. After all we must remember that the goal and objective of all human activity is a World State in which all citizens would possess the cosmopolitan outlook, would be equal in the eye of the law and would have full and ample opportunity for economic, social and political self-fulfilment. We find that in our own country we have to take particular care of the Depressed Classes, the Scheduled Castes and the Backward classes. We have to atone for our omissions—I won't use the word commissions. We must do all we can to bring them up to the general level and it is a real necessity as much in our interest as in theirs that the gap should be bridged. The strength of the chain is measured by the weakest link of it and so until every link is fully revitalised, we will not have a healthy body politic. I hope this Advisory Committee will place before itself the ideals for which humanity has worked. It

will try to forge such sanctions and such rights as will enable this Assembly not only to frame a constitution but to achieve the independence of India. We are here not only for a formal task but for a real one and that has to be fulfilled. Let us hope that this Advisory committee will bring concord and amity, goodwill and trust, in place of mutual strife, that occupies the political stage today and, that as a result of the deliberations of this Committee we will have prepared the ground for Independent India for which we live, for which many have died and for which alone life is worth living. (*Loud Cheers.*)

Mr President: Sardar Harnam Singh is going to second this.

Sardar Harnam Singh (Punjab: Sikh): Mr President, the Advisory Committee which has to be formed under the provisions of the Statement of 16 May is a very important Committee from many points of view. All of us know that it is the minorities problem in India that has held up the progress of this country for a number of years and a satisfactory solution of this problem, I believe, will lead to the prosperity of the country. We have laid down, in the Objectives Resolution that in the future Constitution of India, an adequate provision for the protection of all minorities has to be provided for. As far as the Congress is concerned, beginning with 1922 when the demand was made for a Constituent Assembly of India, several resolutions have been passed in which it has been laid down by the Congress that provisions for the protection of minorities have to be made to the satisfaction of the minorities concerned. Therefore I am glad that the Congress Party in this House has agreed to the constitution of this body which has commended itself to all members in the Constituent Assembly of India. As to what the ultimate solution of the communal problem proposed by this Advisory Committee may be nobody can say at this stage. But we all know that the whole of the communal problem is before this Minority Committee. The clauses for the protection of minorities which have to be framed by this Advisory Committee, have some relation to existing facts. The clauses for the protection of minorities pertain to the religious, cultural, economic, administrative and political spheres. Communities in India have heretofore laid stress on certain provisions in the Government of India Act, as provisions which may be retained for the proper protection of minorities. Whether the Advisory Committee would make its report on those lines it is not for me to say at this stage. Those provisions all of us know. We know that Anglo-Indians have got section 242 of the Government of India Act. Certain other communities have laid stress on the weightage provided to them. Other communities have insisted on the retention of separate electorates. Some of these provisions may have done mischief in years past, but I do believe that this Advisory Committee will consider the question of the protection of minorities from all these various points of view and, whatever is good in the larger interests of the country and also in the interests of the minorities, that will find a place in the report of this Advisory Committee.

Sir, for a proper understanding of this Advisory Committee and its functions we have to go into all that lengthy correspondence which passed between Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mr M.A. Jinnah and Lord Pethick Lawrence. In one of the letters that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad wrote to Pethick Lawrence he insisted that for a proper solution of the communal problem there must be consent of all the parties affected, and in fact, on the 12th May 1946 when the Congress formulated eight points as a basis for agreement, point No. 6 was that as far as the minority problem was concerned, the Congress stood for the consent of communities concerned for a satisfactory solution of the problem. Therefore I hope that when this Advisory Committee sits to initiate and formulate proposals for the protection of minorities and fundamental rights, the

whole field would have been covered, and it would be covered in such a way that it would be fair to the larger as well as the smaller interests so that all communities—big or small—would feel satisfied with the recommendations of this Advisory Committee. With these few words, Sir, I second the Resolution moved by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant.

Mr President: I find that in the Order Paper, notice has been given of several amendments. I think the most convenient course would be to ask the amendments to be moved on each particular clause. Therefore, all those members who have got any amendment on any particular clause will move the amendment when I name the particular clause.

The first is clause 1 (a). Mr Munshi has given notice of an amendment.

Mr Damber Singh Gurung (Bengal: General): On a point of information, Sir, before any amendments are moved, may I know whether any time has been given for giving notice of amendments? This Resolution has been circulated only just now. Members have to be given some time.

Mr President: I understand this Resolution was circulated several days ago.

Mr Damber Singh Gurung: But this has been circulated here to the members just now. It may have been circulated several days ago in the party meeting.

Mr President: No, no. The Resolution which has been moved by Pandit Pant was circulated to Members several days ago.

Mr Damber Singh Gurung: My point is: now there is no Muslim League here. This thing was circulated in the party meeting.

Mr President: No. I think you are under a misunderstanding. I am referring to the Resolution which was moved by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. Notice of that Resolution was given to members several days ago. No other amendment has yet been moved...

Mr Damber Singh Gurung: But this Resolution was just given to the members.

Mr President: Here in the House? I am afraid you are referring to some other Resolution. This one was circulated several days ago.

Mr K.M. Munshi (Bombay: General): Sir, I beg to move that in sub paragraph (a) of paragraph 1 of the Resolution, substitute the number '72' for the number '68'. As already explained by Mr Govind Ballabh Pant, it is necessary to increase the number in order to accommodate the seats which are duly provided for in the other part of the Resolution. I therefore move this amendment.

Mr President: Is there any other amendment to clause 1?...Nothing else. I put Mr Munshi's amendment to vote.

The amendment was adopted.

Mr President: Now, we go to the next one. I find Rev. Nichols-Roy has given notice of an amendment.

The Hon'ble Rev J.J.M. Nichols-Roy (Assam: General): I shall not move it.

Mr President: Then we will go to (b) (i). Mr Santhanam has given notice of an amendment.

Sri K. Santhanam (Madras: General): I do not want to move it.

Mr President: Then Mr Munshi.

Mr K.M. Munshi: Mr President, Sir, I beg to move the following amendment to clause (b) (i). My amendment reads thus:

‘That in sub-paragraph (b) (i) of Paragraph 1 of the motion for the words beginning with 52 members—the words are these:

“52 members who shall be elected by the Assembly in accordance with the principle of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote”—substitute:

“The following members”

The names are given in the amendment. The clause will read like this:

“It shall consist initially of the following members.”

and then the names will follow, I will read the names, The different categories have already been placed before the House by the mover of the Resolution and I will read the names, indicating the nature of the seats.

Mr Jairamdas Daulatram from Sind,
The Hon’ble Mr Mehr Chand Khanna, NWFP,
Dr Gopi Chand Bhargava from the Punjab,
Bakshi Sir Tek Chand also from the Punjab,
Dr Profulla Chandra Ghosh from Bengal,
Mr Surendra Mohan Ghose from Bengal,
Dr Syam[a] Prasad Mookherjee from Bengal.

Then comes a group representing the Scheduled castes:

Sardar Prithvi Singh Azad,
Shri Dharam Prakash,
Mr H.J. Khandekar,
The Hon’ble Mr Jagjivan Ram
Mr P.R. Thakur,
Dr B.R. Ambedkar,
Shri V.I. Muniswami Pillai.

The next group of six names are those of Sikhs:

Sardar Jogendra Singh,
The Hon’ble Sardar Baldev Singh,
Sardar Pratap Singh,
Sardar Harnam Singh,
Sardar Ujjal Singh,
Sardar Kartar Singh.

The next four names are those of Indian Christians:

Dr H.C. Mookherjee,
Dr Alban D’Souza,
Shri Salve,
Shri Roche-Victoria.

The next three names are of Anglo-Indians:

Mr S.H. Prater,
Mr Frank Reginald Anthony,
Mr M.V.H. Collins.

The next three names are of Parsis:

Sir Homi Mody,
Mr M.R. Masani,
Mr R.K. Sidhwa.

Number 31, Shri Rup Nath Brahma represents the plains tribes of Assam.

Number 32, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan represents the North-Western tribal area. Two other members to represent that area have to be nominated, by the President.

Khan Abdul Samad Khan represents Baluchistan.

The Hon'ble Rev. J.J.M. Nichols-Roy.

In Number 35, the name is wrongly spelt, it should be Shri Mayang Nokcha.

I do not know how to pronounce it. He represents the North-Eastern tribal areas. Then follow three names of persons who represent the Excluded and Partially Excluded areas:

Shri Phool Bhan Shaha,
Mr Devendra Nath Samanta,

Mr Jaipal Singh, representing the excluded areas in Bihar, and three others have to be nominated by the President.

Then come twelve general names:

Acharya J.B. Kripalani,
The Hon'ble Maulana Abul Kalam Azad,
The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,
The Hon'ble Shri C. Rajagopalachariar,
Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,
Shrimati Hansa Mehta,
The Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant,
The Hon'ble Srijut Gopinath Bardoloi,
The Hon'ble Shri Purushottamdas Tandon,
Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar,
Shri K.T. Shah and
Mr K.M. Munshi.

I move this amendment, Sir.

Acharya J.B. Kripalani (United Provinces: General): Sir, I second it.

Mr President: Is there no other amendment? Mr Munshi, there is one other amendment in your name?

Mr K.M. Munshi: That does not arise now, Sir.

Mr President: There are several others; you don't move them also?

Mr K.M. Munshi: No, Sir.

Mr President: There is another amendment, notice of which has been given by the Rev Nichols-Roy.

The Hon'ble Rev. J.J.M. Nichols-Roy: Sir, I wanted to add one or two more names, but I find that that will disturb the number which has already been passed in this House. So I shall not move my amendment.

Mr President: The Resolution has been moved, as also the amendments. The matter is now for discussion.

Rai Bahadur Syamanandan Sahaya (Bihar: General): Sir, I would like to make a submission with regard to the amendment. In the Rules that we have adopted, it is clearly laid down in Rule 46 (2)—that:

‘The members of every such committee shall, unless the motion by which the committee is set up otherwise provides, be elected according to the principle of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.’

I submit, Sir, that this is a very salutary provision which aims to give general satisfaction to all sections of this House. In a House constituted as this one is, I think, it will be desirable if, this correct method of selecting members for committees is followed. I find that the amendment of Mr Munshi, however, gives definite names, and naturally, the names will have to be voted upon if other names are proposed. What would be the procedure for election, I ask? This is a matter, Sir, to which I will draw your special attention because it lays down for the future a precedent which might not be very helpful when we come to decide more delicate matters. As such I would appeal to you, and also I appeal to Mr Munshi to allow the original motion to be adopted and then to propose names and the names could be voted upon by the procedure laid down, namely, proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote. This is an important matter and I will not only draw your personal attention to the matter but also draw the attention of the whole House and every section of the House to it. It is a departure which, I think, is not a healthy departure and must not be acted upon by this House.

Mr Jaipal Singh (Bihar: General): Mr President, now that the names have been combined in the Resolution of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, I feel I must say a few words from the tribal point of view. I strongly resent the insinuation by Pandit Pant. He said that the Tribal Areas and minorities look to a foreign country.

The Hon’ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant: I never said so. Please do not put in my mouth words I never said.

Mr Jaipal Singh: We look to our own countrymen. We look to our own leaders to give us a fair and square deal. We have not gone abroad. We did not go to London for negotiations. We did not go to meet the Cabinet Mission for provisions for our rights. We look only to our own countrymen to give us a fair and equitable deal. For the last six thousand years we have been shabbily treated.

Mr Kiran Sankar Roy (Bengal: General): How many years?

Mr Jaipal Singh: Six thousand years, Mr Kiran Sankar Roy, that is the time you, Non-Adibasis, have been in this country.

Sir, the mover and the seconder have indicated how the disposition, the distribution has been made in this Advisory Committee. This is a matter of life and death for the tribal people in particular. I congratulate the Indian National Congress leaders; I congratulate also those minority communities who have been able to get more seats than are due to them numerically. That cannot be denied. Number for number, the Sikhs, the Christians, the Anglo-Indians and the Parsis have been given more than is their due. I do not grudge them all this; but, the fact remains that they have been given many more seats than is their due, whereas when we come to my people, the real and most ancient people of this country, the position is different. But

I do not grumble. For my purpose, it would be quite enough to have Panditji only; but he is not a member. I would entrust the future of every tribal people in this country in the hands of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and rather be not there myself. Let me assure you, that we are not dependent on numbers—the number votes that will be given in the Advisory Committee. We have been inarticulate. I led no deputation to Sardar Patel, or to you, Mr President, about our rights, about our claims and about our dues. I leave it to the good sense of the House and of the Advisory Committee, that, at long last, they will right the injuries of six thousand years. In another place, once when I said that a particular group of our Indian nation had been heavily weighted, my remarks were resented by that particular group. I tell you that it does not worry us at all if the Sikhs get 60 seats in this particular Advisory Committee or anywhere else. I congratulate them. We thank the Indian National Congress for saying that the minority question cannot be over-rated, as Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant said. But has it been over-rated as far as the tribals are concerned? Can it be honestly said that you have in any way over-rated their position? I am not pleading for anymore seats; I have not submitted any amendment, I am not moving any amendment, but I must draw the attention of this House and of this country, if I may say so, that here we are all on trial. Hitherto it has been very easy for us to say it is the British—it is the British who have kept you in a zoo by making for you Partially Excluded Areas and Excluded Areas. Are you behaving any differently? I ask this question. I ask the Advisory Committee. I find my own name in it. While I find my own name in it, I am bound to point out that there is no name of any tribal woman in the Advisory Committee. How has that been left out? There is no tribal woman member in Advisory Committee. That never occurred to the people who were responsible for the selection of members of the Committee. I am not saying that she should be included, but it is significant that the thing has not been seriously considered. Similarly, as I repeat, thirteen or whatever the figure is that has been fixed—I accept that, I do not say any more, but I do want to expose the ignorance that is exposed in the suggestion of this figure, or for that matter, in the nomination of the Tribal Areas members. Look at the disposition of the tribal population throughout India. I have no quarrel with the muddling that has been made in the census enumeration at every decennial reckoning. The latest figure is 254 lakhs, I accept that. Now in that we find that the largest tribal group in India are the Munda-speaking tribe. If you add up their 1941 figures, you will find that they are something like 43 lakhs. The next in magnitude are the Gonds. Now we have been given a Gond representative; I am glad there is one. The next come Bhils, 23 lakhs. No Bhil is on this Committee. Like that, we go on to Oraons, with 11 lakhs, there is no Oraon on this Committee. Mr President, time is valuable. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru elsewhere said that every day we take it costs something like Rs 10,000. I think the life of 25 million tribals is worth more than Rs 10,000 a day. This is an opportunity where I must have my say, if you will permit me. I note also that, for some reason or other, there is no tribal member at all in the Fundamental Rights Committee.

The Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant: There is no separate Committee. There is only one Committee.

Mr Jaipal Singh: In the speech you have envisaged that some were going to be put in the Committee to deal with the fundamental rights of citizens.

The Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant: No. That depends on the Advisory Committee. It may form such Sub-Committees as it likes.

Mr Jaipal Singh: Very well. I accept that. As I say, there is no way to include every tribal group. There are altogether listed in India in the 1941 census 177 tribes. Obviously, it would be impossible to have 177 members. But whatever the number that has been allotted—I say I accept that, Mr President, but I am, in duty bound to my people, to point out to the House that we would have to deal with this tribal question, as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru told us when speaking on the Independent Sovereign Republic Resolution,—that this problem would have to be dealt with imaginatively and emotionally. This House is on trial; let us see what happens.

The Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant: All will do well.

Mr President: There was some misunderstanding with regard to the other amendment on the Order Paper. I was under the impression that there was no other amendment. I find that there are some more amendments. All the other amendments may be moved.

Mr K.M. Munshi: To (b) or (c)?

Mr President: All the amendments to the whole motion.

Mr K.M. Munshi: The next amendment that stands in my name is this:

‘That sub-paragraph (b) (i) of paragraph 1 of the motion be deleted.’

That sub-paragraph runs as follows:

‘The Assembly may elect in such manner as the President may deem appropriate up to 7 members.’

As the House will see, provision has been made later for increasing the number of nominations by the President by 7, that is, to raise the number from 9 to 22. So I shall also move at the same time the amendment which stands in my name with reference to sub-paragraph (c) of paragraph 1 of the motion.

‘That in sub-paragraph (c) of paragraph 1 of the motion, the number “22” be substituted for the number “9” and the words “7 of whom shall be Muslims representing the Provinces of Madras, Bombay, the United Provinces, Bihar, the Central Provinces, Orissa and Assam be added.”’

The object is that there are what are called Hindu majority Provinces and Muslim minorities in these Provinces have to be elected on this Committee. That was the original idea, but as this preliminary sitting is going to be adjourned for the time being, if the Muslim League comes in, it may be difficult to convene a preliminary sitting again only for the purpose of electing seven members. Therefore, it is that I move this amendment. If the preliminary sitting is adjourned to April or any other date, and the Muslim League comes in, seven Muslim members representing the seven Hindu majority Provinces may be nominated by the President and may join this Committee. I submit that they could all be accepted by the House. So I move all the amendments at the same time.

Mr President: Is there any other amendment? Paragraph 2? None. Paragraph 3? None.

I understand that Sir N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar has got an amendment.

The Hon'ble Sir N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar (Madras: General): Mr President, under Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure, every motion by which a Committee is to be set up shall state the quorum necessary to constitute a meeting of the Committee. This has not been done in the motion that has been moved. It is a mandatory provision and in order to supply the omission I request your permission under Rule 26 that I may be permitted to move this new amendment of which I have not given notice. The amendment is this:

After para 3 of the Resolution, the following shall be inserted as para 3(a) namely, 'the quorum for the Committee and its sub-committees shall be one-third of the total number of members for the time being of the Committee or of the sub-committee concerned.'

Mr K.M. Munshi: I have to move an amendment to paragraph 4. Para 4 as it stands reads thus:

'The Advisory Committee shall submit the final report to the Union Constituent Assembly within three months and may submit interim reports from time to time.'

The change my amendment seeks to effect is this:

In paragraph 4, between the words 'three months' and the word 'and' add the words 'from the date of this Resolution'. Then again, after the word 'time' substitute a comma for the fullstop and add the words 'but shall submit an interim report on Fundamental Rights within six weeks and an interim report on minority rights within ten weeks of such date.'

Sir, Clause 4 as amended will run thus:

The Advisory Committee shall submit the final report to the Union Constituent Assembly within three months from the date of this Resolution and may submit interim reports from time to time, but shall submit an interim report on Fundamental Rights within six weeks and an interim report on minority rights within ten weeks of such date.

My next amendment, Sir, is to paragraph 5. It is this:

'In paragraph 5 of the motion, for the words beginning with "in the manner" up to the end of the paragraph, the words "by nomination by the President" be substituted.'

Paragraph 5 as originally drafted reads:

Casual vacancies in the Advisory Committee shall be filled as soon as possible after they occur in the manner in which the seat in respect of which the vacancy had arisen was originally filled.

The object of this amendment is to provide for a certain contingency. When this preliminary sitting of the Assembly is adjourned, the Committee is going to function. If, in the meantime, there is any vacancy, it will be impossible to fill it up till the next meeting of the Constituent Assembly. Therefore it is better to give this power to the President so that in case of a vacancy arising, he can appoint a member to fill up that vacancy.

Sir, these are the amendments that I have to move.

Mr F.R. Anthony (Bengal: General): Mr President, Sir, I had absolutely no intention of entering this discussion but unfortunately, a remark of a previous speaker, which included the Anglo-Indians among those to whom, he alleged, over-representation had been given, has brought me to my feet. I have always been reluctant, although a communal leader, to pursue communal hares and I am even more reluctant to enter into any unseemly communal dog-fights. But I think there is some misunderstanding on the part of some members of the House about the State Paper and about the real intention of the authors of that Paper. Sir, if it was felt that there was no need for an Advisory Committee on Minorities I would subscribe to it. But so long as you have a committee on minorities, so long as other minorities are insisting on their rights, alleged or real, then, certain minorities, particularly the smaller minorities have, in self-defence to ask for certain representation. I agree with what Mr Jaipal Singh said, namely, that most of the minorities would gladly allow their interests to be taken care of by a leader of the stature of Pandit Nehru. I would be the first to say: 'Leave it in his hands'. But, unfortunately, these matters are not being decided at such a high level. All persons in this country are not of

that stature. Unfortunately there is a tendency today for communalism to become even more intransigent and clamant than it has been in the past and I wish this obsession on numerical proportions to be slightly effaced.

Sir, we are dealing with a specific State Paper. We are dealing with paragraph 20 of the Cabinet Mission's Statement. The intention in paragraph 20 was set out in detail in Sir Stafford Cripps' official explanation. He was not concerned, the Cabinet Mission was not concerned with numerical proportions. This question of numerical proportion has become rather a favourite slogan in this country. Sir Stafford specifically mentioned that this Advisory Committee had been set up in order to give an opportunity not to the minorities but to the smaller minorities of influencing the provisions concerning the minorities. He specifically mentioned that it was their (the Cabinet Mission's) intention that representation should be given particularly to the Indian Christians, to the Anglo-Indians and to the Tribal Areas; and although we have, for the sake of amity and a friendly atmosphere, accepted the representation that was granted to the minorities, it was made clear that perhaps the real intention of the Cabinet Mission had not been implemented in the allotment of seats that was made, at any rate, to my community. I want to disabuse the House of any feeling that my minority has been over-represented. It was the obvious intention of the Cabinet Mission to give the smaller minorities that have been specified—the Indian Christians, the Anglo-Indians and the Tribal Areas—an opportunity of influencing minority decisions through this Advisory Committee. No other smaller minorities have been mentioned. The point whether the intention was implemented in introducing other minorities, I am not going to labour at this stage. But the Cabinet Mission obviously had something at the back of their minds when they made this provision. They had the cases of the different minorities before them. They realized that certain minorities, although numerically small, had vital interests to be protected in the general political structure and their sole purpose in setting up this Advisory Committee was to give the minorities particularly these three minorities that they have specified, an opportunity of influencing minority decisions.

Mr Dambar Singh Gurung: Mr Chairman, Sir, in the list of names of the Advisory Committee proposed by Mr K.M. Munshi, I do not find any name of a Gorkha representative here. I do not want to refer to the terms of clause 20 of the Cabinet Mission's statement of 16 May, but I must pointedly draw the attention of the House to the Resolution on Objectives moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and passed by this House a few days ago, Paragraph 6 of that Resolution says,—

Wherein adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities, Backward and Tribal Areas, and Depressed and other Backward Classes.

It is the function of the Advisory Committee to give advice to the Constituent Assembly as to the manner in which the safeguards for the minorities, backward and tribal peoples are to be provided. Presumably, in the Advisory Committee there must be representatives of all these classes of people. Now, Sir, if there is no Gorkha on the Advisory Committee, who will speak for them and how their interests and rights be safeguarded? It is a fact that the Gorkhas form a distinct minority group and no one can deny the fact that they are the most backward people in India. If Gorkhas, as such, are not represented they have a right to be represented here as people living in the Excluded Areas and Partially Excluded Areas, because Darjeeling District, where there are more than 3 lakhs of Gorkhas, is a Partially Excluded Area; and even as tribals because the Gorkhas have been classed as tribals in the Census Report of 1941 in Bengal. If the Gorkhas are not represented in the only body that has been provided for devising means

to safeguard in the interests of oppressed and backward peoples, I, as a Gorkha, do not see any advantage in my being a member of the Constituent Assembly. The other day President Kripalani told me that the Gorkhas would fight with their swords. I quite agree. The Gorkhas fought with their swords for the rulers of India, but now the Gorkhas have decided to fight for the freedom of India and will fight for free India, but at the same time I must appeal to the House that their case also must be considered, as they are very backward educationally and economically and as the Advisory Committee is the only Committee where all these things can be brought up and discussed. I appeal to the House to consider this point.

Mr K.M. Munshi: Sir, may I reply as the mover of the amendment?

Mr President: (To Sri K. Santhanam) Do you want to speak?

Sri K. Santhanam: Sir, I wish to make two points with reference to this Resolution. I am anxious that this Advisory Committee should not expand its scope of work to an undue extent. It should not try to encroach upon the functions of the whole Assembly or the Sections. For instance, if it goes into such matters as joint *versus* separate electorates or the quantum of representation, I think it will make the work of this Assembly very difficult. I do not want to expatiate on the point and make the Committee's work difficult but I simply leave it for their consideration.

The second point I wish to mention is about the way in which we have to deal with the report. Ordinarily the report is to be presented to the House, but if we wait for the presentation of the report till this Assembly meets, then we shall have to wait 10 or 15 days for its consideration. It will mean a waste of time of the House. So I suggest that you take the permission of the House to circulate the report as soon as it is received from the Committee so that, when we assemble, all of us may come really prepared and the time of the House may not be wasted. Otherwise there may be legitimate ground for complaint, as it is not sufficient to give one day's, two days' or three days' notice. We must have at least a fortnight's notice. If you wait for the report to be presented to the House and then wait for fifteen days you know the expense, the confusion and the difficulty.

So I make these two suggestions for your consideration.

Rai Bahadur Syamanandan Sahaya: I want to raise a point of order. The motion as amended by Mr Munshi does not lay down any method by which subsequent elections to this Committee will be made because the original provision that elections will be conducted in accordance with the principle of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote has been dropped by the amendment of Mr Munshi. That being so, if one or two names are suggested in addition to the names already suggested by Mr Munshi, what will be the method adopted for election? This amendment of Mr Munshi might circumvent the procedure laid down under the Rules of Procedure. I hope you will not permit it to happen. I would therefore like to have your decision as to what will be the method by which election will be made in case one or two names are also suggested apart from the names already suggested in the amended resolution.

Mr K.M. Munshi: With regard to the point of order, Rule 46 makes perfectly clear that it would be competent for this House to alter the method of election. This is how the Rule runs:

The members of every such committee shall, unless the motion by which the committee is set up otherwise provides, be elected according to the principle of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

Therefore, Sir, it will be seen there is no point of order.

Rai Bahadur Syamanandan Sahaya: I only want to say that the procedure outlined in Rule 46(2) could have been met if Mr Santhanam had moved his amendment by which he wanted to substitute the words 'by ordinary distributive vote' in place of the words in the original motion. Mr Santhanam, not having moved that amendment, there is no procedure laid down. Therefore, Rule 46(2) does not apply.

Mr President: In my opinion, clause (2) of Rule 46 makes it quite clear that the amendment which has been moved by Mr Munshi is in order.

Srimati Dakshayani Velayudan (Madras: General): Mr President, I wish to bring to the notice of this House that there is provision for 7 members to represent the Hindus in the Muslim provinces. Sir, I find that no Harijan's name is included among the Hindus. We, Harijans, consider ourselves one with the Hindu community and we have every right to represent the Hindus in the Muslim Provinces. We have every right to represent the Hindus in Bengal or the Hindus in Sind or in the Punjab. Somebody remarked now that there are already 7 members of the Harijans in the list. That does not mean that the Harijans have no right to represent the Hindus in the Muslim majority provinces. So I simply wanted to bring to the notice of this House that they should not go with the impression that the Harijans here have come only to represent the Harijans of India. We claim that we belong to the Hindu fold. It is the duty of the Caste Hindus to see that the promises that they made should be put into practice by including a Harijan in the list, to represent the Hindus in the Muslim majority provinces. But nobody should be under the impression that I came to speak in this manner here in order that my name may go into the list. I have no desire of that sort, because I do not want to represent those provinces, but there are Harijans, who have come from the Muslim majority Provinces, who have every right to represent the Hindus in their Provinces. So I hope that this House will take into consideration that my opinion is not against the fundamental principle that we are expected to follow.

Sri Lakshminarayan Sahu (Orissa: General): Mr President, Sir, I stand here to inform the House that Orissa has been neglected in this suggestion of Mr K.M. Munshi. We always feel that because we are a docile people, we are always neglected, Now the claim for inclusion of names from Orissa is so great that I hope that this House will accept it. In the first place about two-thirds of Orissa are Partially Excluded and Excluded Areas, and yet though there are 13 names given by Mr K.M. Munshi, there is no name from Orissa. Again there is another point for consideration by the House. According to Mr Munshi's list, there is no Hindu from Orissa and yet one representation will be given to a Muslim. That is really unfair. The majority party there goes unrepresented, whereas we give representation to a minority. I hope that this House will pay its best consideration to this question. I should go in for the Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant's Resolution but as you said that Mr Munshi's motion was in order, I do not want to refute it, but I still feel, as Rai Bahadur Syamanandan Sahaya has pointed out, that in such a matter which is very important, we should adopt the Procedure of single transferable vote. That will solve the question to the satisfaction of all.

Mr Jairam Das Daulatram (Sind: General): I want to say as briefly as I can that, looking to the importance of this Committee and the delicate issues with which it will have to deal, it would not be proper by any discussion here to attempt to restrict the scope of its work. There are members on it representing minorities and majorities, from practically every part of the

country, and they should, I think, in terms of all that has been said both in the Statement of 16th May and elsewhere, be left free to discuss and to decide as to what are adequate provisions or clauses for the protection of minorities. Since the matter is such that a fuller discussion on the point here would raise more and more controversy, I shall confine myself to these remarks only for I expect that the Advisory Committee will look at the matter both from the minority point of view, and the general point of view and try to reconcile the requirements of the minorities with the needs of the national sentiment of the country, as a whole.

Sri S. Nagappa (Madras: General): Mr President, Sir, now, I just want to bring to the notice of this House that out of these 50 members some communities particularly have been given over-representation. If it is equal to all communities as it is said, seven for Hindus, seven for Muslims and seven for Scheduled Classes, I do not know on what basis these figures were drawn up. For instance, if you say there are seven Muslim Provinces that are in a majority, so the Hindus of that province ought to be safeguarded and again because there are seven Hindu Provinces where they are in a majority, the seven Muslims must be there in the Committee to safeguard their interests, it is a good thing. But what about the Harijans. They are in a minority in almost every province. Moreover, if you take the population of these Provinces, then all the Hindus put together in the Muslim majority Provinces, they are not as many as Harijans, and the same thing with the Hindus. And now, Sir, the Parsis is a new minority community that has been brought. That community was not seeking to be a minority community all these days. All of a sudden in this Minority Advisory Committee this particular community has been classified as a minority community. I do not know, Sir, what protection this Parsi community especially seeks? It is well placed in society, economically and educationally. What are the particular safeguards this particular community wants? So also the Anglo-Indian community. Their numbers are very few, but their representation on the Committee is too great. I would suggest it would have been fair if the representation for the Depressed Classes had been 11 instead of 7. Now, if anything cannot be done at this stage, I would request all the Members that are now elected to see that they should not go there in order to champion the cause of a particular community. They must feel one and see that they work for the benefit of all the communities for the homogeneity of all communities and for the prosperity of all the communities. With this motive, they must see that particularly such communities which are not represented properly according to their numbers must be safeguarded. Now only a few days ago we have passed a Resolution declaring our objects and our motives in framing this Constitution. We must stick to the spirit and see that every community got its proper place, though for instance out of 50 only 7 Harijans are there. They are only about one-seventh of the present members. They might fight for their community interests and yet they are in a minority. Their voice may not be heard. So I appeal to all Members who are elected in spite of their majority, to understand the Harijans properly, and if what they want is reasonable, to satisfy if not their complete demand, at least the minimum of the demands put forward by them. With this hope I congratulate the Members that have been elected, and hope they will see that they do full justice especially to such communities as have been suffering for ages, and that what they deserve is given.

The Hon'ble Rev. J.J.M. Nichols-Roy: Sir, the number of members that have been listed here are 50. I wanted to add two more to this number. But after a discussion with Mr Munshi, I decided not to disturb the number that has already been listed here. But, Sir, I want to say this: the minorities in Assam are many. The Tribal Areas there also are very different from

the tribal Areas in other parts of India. Each Tribal area has its own ways and methods of living and culture which would need to be represented in a Committee like this. But I find in paragraph 2 that the Sub-Committees which will be appointed by the Advisory Committee can co-opt some members. This probably will solve the difficulty. I read here:

The Advisory Committee shall appoint sub-committees to prepare schemes for the administration of the North-Western Tribal Areas, the North-Eastern Tribal Areas and the Excluded and partially Excluded Area. Each of such subcommittees may co-opt not more than 2 members from the particular tribal territory under its consideration for the time being, to assist in its work in relation to that territory.

This no doubt, will help the Tribal Areas to get representation and to tell the Advisory Committee what their desire is. In view of this, Sir, I think that the Resolution as presented before the House is quite satisfactory.

I should like to add one more point. I would have liked very much if another Indian Christian had been added to this list. I find that Orissa has not been represented at all.

An Hon'ble Member: What about Andhra?

The Hon'ble Rev. J.J.M. Nichols-Roy: I would like very much one Christian from Orissa be represented. The President may consider the question of Orissa in regard to representation from the Christian community there. That would add only one more member to the four Indian Christian Members who have been listed here. With this request, Sir, I believe that this Resolution is acceptable to the House and it is quite satisfactory as far as it goes. Some of the minorities which have not been represented at all may be given representation by nomination by the President and by co-option by the Sub-Committees.

Mr B. Das (Orissa: General): Sir, the atmosphere this morning in this House and the atmosphere in New Delhi these three or four days reminds me of the atmosphere in 1930–31. In the light of my past experiences I think that the minorities have been given more weightage than before. Murmurings will always be there. It is very very unfortunate that the minority communities do not demand mere justice, equity and fairplay but claim safeguards and weightages under the third party domination. The minority problems should not and must not overshadow the main issue—that of Independence of India.

One thing was stressed by previous speakers—namely, that the majority Hindu provinces have not found representation for their majority community in the Advisory Committee. I am one with them and I demand such representation for the majority Hindu population of Orissa. Orissa must participate in the discussions to enable her to assess those undue burdens that she may have to shoulder for her minority communities.

The Advisory Committee will very likely come to a dead-lock later. I do not anticipate its decisions and I am not a member of that Advisory Committee. But the minorities will still demand safeguards, economic advantages and reservations and weightages to an All-India pattern. All India patterns and decisions may work disaster to a poor province like Orissa, if minimum obligatory expenditure on minority communities be laid down. And yet, a minimum amount of money must have to be spent for the Scheduled Castes and for the Tribal people. The minimum standard in Bihar before separation from Orissa is the maximum standard of Orissa today. Rupees two and annas eight or something like that is the per capita income in Orissa; in other provinces the per capita income goes up to Rs 20 or more. I am not merely pleading here that a Hindu representative from Orissa should be there in the Advisory Committee.

I visualize that the provinces will have residuary powers in an Independent India. Do my colleagues here appreciate that handicaps may be fashioned on minor provinces and stupendous difficulties—administrative and financial—may be imposed on poorer provinces under the cry of safeguards and weightages? It may even break the administrations.

The Advisory Committee should be wide enough to have representatives of Hindus from the Hindu majority provinces, so that it can know the financial and economic position of those provinces. We will have to stoutly oppose any decision of people in the Advisory Committee who do not understand our economic and financial situation in Orissa and we will not accept any safeguards, economic or otherwise, and any undue burdens and handicaps.

Mr Satyanarayan Sinha: I move that the question be now put.

Mr B.K. Sidhwa (CP & Berar: General): May I say a few words, Sir?

Mr President: Closure has been moved. The motion is: that closure be applied.

The motion was adopted.

Mr President: Mr Pant, it was your Resolution. Do you accept the amendments?

The Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant: Sir, I accept the amendments moved by Mr Munshi. On the whole the reception that has been accorded to my Resolution has exceeded my expectations. It is a delicate matter, especially where the question of nomination of individuals comes in. There are many embarrassing aspects of such problems which cannot be easily got over, and which cannot be tackled at any rate in an altogether impersonal manner. So, I would not have been surprised if there had been more vigorous criticism than that displayed by Mr Jaipal Singh when he spoke. I saw that he was chafing and the vehemence of his utterances seemed to me to compensate for the poverty of his ideas. I did not make any suggestion whatsoever against the tribal people. I believe that they have not received that attention and active service at our hands to which they were entitled. I think we owe them a duty and we should do all we can to raise their general level. There is absolutely no issue between him and me. When I suggested that it is unwise to look to any external authority for the protection of the rights of the minorities, I had no particular individual, group or section in mind.

I wanted to utter a word of warning on a subject which is of considerable importance and which often arouses consuming passion. That was my only apology for referring to the developments that had taken place in recent years and I believe that those experiences of Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Austria and other Eastern European States are worthy of being borne in mind in these times when we are going to frame our own Constitution. It was suggested that the election should have been held according to the principle of proportional representation. It had in fact been held according to that principle. As I indicated at the outset in the course of my opening speech, the members of every group had been virtually elected by their own communities and comrades within each and belonging to each Group. We wanted to have the seal of approval of this entire Assembly as the Advisory Committee will be dealing with very great problems and we wanted to give every member of the Committee that sense of confidence which the approval of the membership of the Committee by the entire House is bound to create and convey. So it was to create a sound moral foundation for this Committee that this method was devised but as I said, the elections were unanimous. All members of this House also, barring very few who were not there, agreed to these names but before the names were put before the general body individually, the members of each group had by themselves

selected their representatives. I do not see how any method more satisfactory could possibly have been devised. It augurs well for the deliberations of this Advisory Committee that its personnel should have been selected not only by the different groups that it was intended to represent but also by every member and by all the members of this House. That gives them a position which I think they would covet and they would appreciate. Sir, some omissions from certain Provinces have been mentioned. Well, I readily admit that many more members could have been profitably added to this Committee. We have here talent and public spirit represented in abundance, and everyone who could be added, would have made very useful contribution. But there are practical limitations in matters of this type and you have to see that the structure does not break down by virtue of its weight, even of too many good people. There should be some limitations even as regards excellence in order that men may move, in order that even defects may be tolerated; otherwise if you were to look for a Utopia or for the establishment of Plato's Republic, you will never be able to do anything practical. So it is only the hard realities of the situation which have constrained us to limit this figure to something about 70 and even that is apparently a number big enough for serious deliberation. So it is not because we do not appreciate all that has been said, not because we would not like to have the assistance of the other Hon'ble Members in this House but because this Committee would not stand the strain of heavier weight that we had to restrict the number. There need not be any misgiving in any quarter on that account. After all the decisions in such Committees are not ordinarily taken by vote. Everyone is expected to appreciate the point of view of other colleagues of his. There should be a spirit of accommodation and give and take. So we look forward to unanimity in the decisions and not to majority voting in a Committee of this type. I admit that it is possible for the Hon'ble Members to argue that the numbers allotted to different groups are not strictly in accordance with their population. In matters of this type you cannot have a yard-stick for measuring millions of people and their interests, and would it have made any difference, if there had been two more of the Scheduled Castes or even one less of the Anglo-Indians? I do not think. One worthy representative like Dr Ambedkar or like Mr Anthony can, I think, do, as much as half-a-dozen or more. It is not go much number as calibre and the spirit which inspires the members which ought to count in matters of this character. Let me hope that there will be no occasion for any regret when this Committee begins to function and that all will join together in congratulating this Committee when it has completed its labours.

Mr President: Pandit Pant, you have not said anything regarding the amendment moved by Sir Gopaldaswamy Ayyangar.

The Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant: I accept that amendment.

Mr President: The Resolution has been moved and after that the amendments have been moved and accepted by the Mover. Therefore the amended Resolution will now read thus:

This Assembly resolves that in pursuance of paragraph 20 of the Cabinet Mission's Statement of 16 May, 1946, an Advisory Committee be constituted as hereinafter set out:

1. (a) The Advisory Committee shall consist of not more than 72 members who may include persons who are not members of the Assembly.
- (b) It shall consist initially of the following members
 1. Shri Jairamdas Daulatram.
 2. The Hon'ble Shri Meherchand Khanna.
 3. Dr Gopi Chand Bhargava.

4. Bakshi Sir Tek Chand.
5. Dr Profulla Chandra Ghosh.
6. Shri Surendra Mohan Ghose.
7. Dr Syama Prashad Mookerjee.
8. Shri Prithvi Singh Azad.
9. Shri Dharam Prakash.
10. Shri H.J. Khandekar.
11. The Hon'ble Shri Jagjivan Ram.
12. Shri P.R. Thakur.
13. Dr B.R. Ambedkar.
14. Shri V.I. Muniswami Pillai.
15. Sardar Jogendra Singh.
16. The Hon'ble Sardar Baldev Singh.
17. Sardar Pratap Singh.
18. Sardar Harnam Singh.
19. Sardar Ujjal Singh.
20. Gyani Kartar Singh.
21. Dr H.C. Mookherjee.
22. Dr Alban D'Souza.
23. Shri Salve.
24. Shri Roche-Victoria.
25. Mr S.H. Prater.
26. Mr Frank Reginald Anthony.
27. Mr M.V.H. Collins.
28. Sir Homi Mody.
29. Shri M.R. Masani.
30. Shri R.K. Sidhwa.
31. Shri Rup Nath Brahma.
32. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan.
33. Khan Abdul Samad Khan.
34. The Hon'ble Rev. J.J.M. Nichols-Roy.
35. Shri Mayang Mokcha.
36. Shri Phool Bhan Shaha.
37. Shri Devendra Nath Samanta.
38. Shri Jaipal Singh.
39. Acharya J.B. Kripalani.
40. The Hon'ble Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.
41. The Hon'ble Sardar J. Vallabhbhai Patel.
42. The Hon'ble Sri C. Rajagopalachariar.
43. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.
44. Shrimati Hansa Mehta.
45. The Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant.
46. The Hon'ble Sriju Gopinath Bardoloi.
47. The Hon'ble Shri Purushottamdas Tandon.
48. Diwan Bahadur Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar.

49. Shri K.T. Shah.
50. Shri K.M. Munshi.
- (c) The President may at any time or at different times nominate members to the Committee not exceeding 22, 7 of whom shall be Muslims representing the Provinces of Madras, Bombay, the United Provinces, Bihar, the Central Provinces, Orissa and Assam.
2. The Advisory Committee shall appoint Sub-Committees to prepare schemes for the administration of the North-Western tribal areas, the North-Eastern tribal areas and the excluded and partially excluded areas. Each of such Sub-Committees may co-opt more than 2 members from the particular tribal territory under its consideration for the time being, to assist it in its work in relation to that territory.
3. The Advisory Committee may appoint other Sub-Committees from time to time as it may deem necessary.
- 3-A. The quorum for the Committee or any of its Sub-Committees shall be one-third of the total number of members for the time being of the Committee or of the Sub-Committee concerned.
4. The Advisory Committee shall submit the final report to the Union Constituent Assembly within three months from the date of this Resolution and may submit interim reports from time to time, but shall submit an interim report on Fundamental Rights within six weeks and an interim report on minority rights within ten weeks of such date.
5. Casual vacancies in the Advisory Committee shall be filled as soon as possible after they occur by nomination by the President.
6. The President may make standing orders for the conduct of the proceedings of the Committee.

I shall now put the Resolution as amended, to vote.

8. Constitution of the Committee on Subjects Assigned to the Union Centre

Extract from Constituent Assembly Proceedings, 25 January 1947
Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. II, pp. 352–8.

The Hon'ble Sri C. Rajagopalachariar (Madras: General): I beg to move the Resolution standing in my name, which reads as follows:

Whereas In paragraph 15(i) of the Cabinet Delegation's Statement of 16 May, the subjects assigned to the Union Centre are generally and compendiously indicated under four broad categories,

And Whereas an understanding of the scope of these subjects is necessary for the purpose of framing the Union and other Constitutions, of avoiding as far as possible overlapping and conflicts between the provisions in the Constitution relating to the Union and those in the Constitutions referred to in clause (v) of paragraph 19 of the Statement, and of bringing all the said Constitutions into line with each other.

And Whereas it is necessary to draw up lists of matters included in and inter-connected with the subjects assigned to the Union before the framing of the Constitutions referred to in clause (v) of paragraph 19 of the Statement is taken up for consideration;

This Assembly resolves—

- (a) that a committee consisting initially of twelve members, elected according to the principle of promotional representation by means of the single transferable vote, be constituted to examine the above matters and to report to the Assembly not later than the 15th of April, 1947, and
- (b) that the President may add ten more persons to the committee, and that the selection of all or any of these ten additional members be made at such time and in such manner as the President may determine.

Sir, I might take the matter a little in advance and mention that there are three amendments that are going to be proposed to this motion of mine, and those amendments deal with subsidiary matters, Mr Munshi and Mr Satyanarayan Sinha will move them in due course and I propose to accept them. So, in order to make the matter easier to understand I shall read the Resolution as it will stand when these amendments are accepted. The first part of the Resolution, that is, the preamble, stand as before, but the operative part would read like this:

‘This Assembly resolves—

- (a) that a committee consisting of the following members:
 1. The Hon’ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru....’

Mr C.E. Gibbon (CP and Berar: General): On a point of order, Sir, Until such time as the amendments are officially moved and the mover of the Resolution accepts them, how could he incorporate them in the original Resolution?

Mr President: He has not incorporated any part of the amendment. He is only reading it out.

Mr C.E. Gibbon: He is accepting it before it is moved.

Mr President: He said he proposes to accept it.

The Hon’ble Sri C. Rajagopalachariar: I have read the Resolution as it stands in the Paper and I have referred to the amendments circulated and I think it would save time if I explained to the members in advance that I propose to accept those amendments, and in order that the matter may be clearly understood, I am reading it. If permitted, I shall go on.

Mr President: Yes.

The Hon’ble Sri C. Rajagopalachariar: The operative part would read like this:

‘This Assembly resolves—

- (a) that a committee consisting initially of the following members:
 1. The Hon’ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
 2. Mr Sarat Chandra Bose
 3. Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya
 4. The Hon’ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant
 5. Mr Jairam Das Daulatram
 6. Sri Biswanath Das
 7. The Hon’ble Sir N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar
 8. Bakshi Sir Tek Chand
 9. Diwan Bahadur Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar

10. Mr D.P. Khaitan
11. Mr M.R. Masani
12. Mr K.M. Munshi.

be constituted to examine the above matters and to report to the Assembly not later than the 15th of April, 1947.

- (b) that the President may add ten more persons to the committee, and that the selection of all or any of these ten additional members be made at such time and in such manner as the President may determine,
- (c) that the quorum for the Committee shall be one-third of the total number of members for the time being of the Committee, and
- (d) that casual vacancies in the committee be filled as soon as possible after they occur by nomination by the President from among the members of the Assembly'.

Sir, the object of the Resolution is to help this Assembly in framing the Constitution so as not to leave for the future any overlapping or conflicts that might occur if various proceedings took place without correlation in different Sections of the Assembly or otherwise. I may be permitted, therefore, to explain exactly what the possibilities are which we wish to avoid.

This Assembly, Sir, has been entrusted with a very serious task, perhaps more onerous than any Constituent Assembly in the world has had to deal with. The number of differences that have to be settled are enormous; the population that has to be satisfied is enormous; and the problems that are before the Assembly are as difficult as any which any other Assembly has had before it. The British Government's Statement has put things in a fairly clear way, but not quite as clearly as we would desire it. If we examine the British Government's Statement, on which this Assembly's programme is based, we will find few matters settled clearly.

No. 1—it is decided that we are to frame a constitution for a united India.

No. 2—we have to frame a constitution where the Centre is given the power over Defence, Communications and Foreign Affairs and also powers necessary to raise the finances required for the above subjects.

And then thirdly another principle has been laid down that the residuary powers, that is to say, all powers which have not been transferred to the Central Government, should remain in the Provinces. Then fourthly, a subsidiary point is laid down also, that such powers as the Provinces agree to transfer to any Groups they may form would go to the Groups. All subjects other than the Union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the Provinces. The States will retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union. This is (3) and (4) of Clause 15 of the State. It is further laid down that there will be a ten-year revision of this Constitution and the initiative for that revision is vested in the Provinces. These are the broad principles laid down in Clause 15:

But let us examine this a little more closely. We find in sub-clause (1) that:

'The Union should have all the powers necessary to raise the finances required for the above subject.'

Now, what are powers, unless we mean the power actually to enforce the law as prescribed for raising the finances and that would include, Sir, the power collection and probably also the power of securing the services of a proper judiciary wherever required. No provision has been put down for this purpose. Again, if we examine Clause 19 which gives the procedure for carrying out the principles set out in clause 15, we find, strangely enough, a lacuna. In

sub-clause (v) of clause 19 it is stated that the Sections shall proceed to settle Provincial Constitutions and then they shall also decide whether any Group Constitution shall be set up, and if so with what provincial subjects the group shall deal. Then the representatives of the Sections and the Indian States shall re-assemble for the purpose of settling the Union Constitution. Now, there is no provision as to how and when the Group Constitution shall be settled. Beyond stating that whether any Group Constitution shall be set up may be decided in the Sections and also that the Sections shall set out the provincial subjects with which the groups should deal there is no provision for settling the Group Constitution itself.

Then, again, if we examine the provisions as to the Advisory Committee on Minorities, we find this. The Advisory Committee shall report to the Union Constituent Assembly upon the list of fundamental rights, clauses for protecting minorities and a scheme for the administration of Tribal and Excluded Areas and it should advise whether these rights, should be incorporated in the Provincial, the Group or the Union Constitutions. Now, it follows logically that when the Advisory Committee has reported to the Union Assembly, the Union Assembly should have the power to see whether it should be incorporated in the Provincial or in the Group or in the Union Constitutions. If the Provincial and Group constitutions should be settled beforehand, and at a later sitting of the Union Assembly, they decide that it should be incorporated in the Provincial or Group Constitutions, what is the procedure to be followed? Therefore, there is a great deal of correlation to be done before we can carry out the intentions of the Cabinet Mission's Statements, or the Resolutions of this Assembly. If we interpret the programme laid down in clause 19 literally and assume that what is asked to be done at the various sittings should be the only things done at this stage and nothing else, we will be landed in a great deal of difficulty at the end in carrying out the explicit intentions of the Cabinet Mission's Statement. Considering all these matters, it has been found necessary, we have found it necessary, Sir, to make this motion for the appointment of a committee which shall do the required thinking on these matters and report to this House before we end the preliminary session so that we may frame our programme of future work.

This Assembly has to consider, as I said before, very serious matters, and we will have to do a great deal of thinking. We cannot do our work on the assumption that we are here only to register previously arrived decisions, opinions and programmes. We have to do a lot of substantial thinking in this Constituent Assembly; and in the nature of things, therefore, we require the assistance of a select Committee to consider and advise us on the difficulties that may arise in the course of our work. It is with that object that this Committee has been proposed. It is not with the object of undermining the essential intentions of the Cabinet Mission's Statement or anything of that kind. It is to help us to think out our difficulties and to find solutions for those difficulties.

Sir, if I may venture to put it that way, it is not only a matter of culture or good-breeding, but it is statesmanship to think of those who are absent, to think of other people than ourselves, when we deal with any matter. That is why in proposing every motion, Hon'ble Members have dealt with the intentions and purposes of those who are not yet present in this Assembly. We find a great many possibilities of misunderstanding and we try to anticipate those difficulties and remove possibilities of misunderstanding as far as we can. In this connection I would mention, therefore, that those who are absent should not misunderstand the purpose of this Committee that I am proposing. The Muslim League policy has been to secure a separate, sovereign State of their own. Now, this Constituent Assembly has taken up its task on the basis of the Cabinet Mission's Statement and if one thing is more clearly decided in His Majesty's

Government's Statement than anything else, it is this, that there shall be only one sovereign state in India. It has been decided clearly beyond all possibility of doubt that a division of India into two sovereign states is not to be thought of in this connection. That explains many of the things that we are doing and will remove many of the misunderstandings that are likely to arise. If I may put it that way, the League has gone the wrong way for securing their objective. If they had only restricted their claims to what legitimately should be asked in pursuance of their policy, possibly they might have achieved their object and they would not have been in the present difficulty. Let me put it frankly. The greatest difficulty for the Muslim League now is that they have to join this Assembly and thereby, once for all and beyond doubt, accept the single sovereign State of India. That is why we find it difficult to come in, and that is why these postponements. That is why the League fixes its date always after the meetings that the other major parties have programmed for their consultations. That is why we find to-day, even after the last adjournment, the League has been unable to make up its mind and join us. Let us understand the difficulties of the other side. If the League comes in, they come in on the express understanding that India shall be only one sovereign State, abandoning their separatist policy. This is difficult for them to do at once. Let us realize these difficulties of the Muslim League Members in the way of their coming and joining us at this stage. Let me think it over. Let us give them ample time to come. But that does not mean that we stop our work, that we stop thinking, that we stop doing anything whatsoever, until they make up their minds. That would lead to indefinite postponement. Hence, Sir, I have no hesitation in recommending this Resolution that we should appoint this Committee of twelve members as proposed, so that they may think out all the difficulties and advise us so that we may frame a constitution for India which will create no difficulties for those who have to work it, and which will be a stable, strong constitution for the Centre with stable and strong constitutions for the provinces, to work under the Centre and in the single State that is being contemplated. Therefore, Sir, I move that this Resolution be accepted by the House. As I said before, there are two amendments. One is to replace the election by proportional representation, by twelve members definitely named to the House; and the other is to provide for quorum and another is to provide for casual vacancies. I commend the Resolution with these amendments.

Mr President: Mr Munshi can move his amendment.

Mr Satyanarayanan Sinha: May I be permitted to move it?

Mr President: Yes.

Mr Satyanarayanan Sinha: Sir, I beg to move the amendments which stand in the name of Mr Munshi, as permitted by you:

'That is clause (a) of the motion, for the words beginning with "twelve members" and ending with "the single transferable vote", the following be substituted:
"the following members:

1. The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
2. Mr Sarat Chandra Bose
3. Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya
4. The Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant
5. Mr Jairam Das Daulatram
6. Sri Biswanath Das
7. The Hon'ble Sir N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar
8. Bakshi Sir Tek Chand

9. Diwan Bahadur Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar
10. Mr D.P. Khaitan
11. Mr M.R. Masani, and
12. Mr K.M. Munshi.'

If you will permit me, Sir, I will move the other amendment also.

Mr C.E. Gibbon: Sir, on another point of order. When Mr Munshi, who has given notice of these amendments is not present in the House, can anybody else move them in his absence?

Mr President: I suppose any one else can move them if permitted by the Chair.

Mr Satyanarayanan Sinha: The second amendment which is in the name of Mr Munshi and which I move is as follows:

'That the word "and" at the end of clause (a) be deleted and at the end of clause (b) the full stop be changed into a comma and the following be added:

and (c) that casual vacancies in the committee be filled as soon as possible after they occur by nomination by the President from among the members of the Assembly.'

'That the word "and" at the end of clause (a) be deleted and at the end of clause (b) the full stop be changed into a comma and the following be added as a new paragraph:

"(c) that the quorum for the committee shall be one-third of the total number of members for the time being of the committee."

Mr P.R. Thakur (Bengal: General): This is an important Resolution and this Committee which is going to be appointed will consider the subjects that will be reserved to the Centre. My Hon'ble friend, Mr Rajagopalachariar, did not say anything about the maintenance of peace throughout the country and the prevention of famines. These two things are essential and I say so, because we, Bengalis, are the worst sufferers; we had recently communal rioting in Bengal and there was also famine. We asked for help from the Local Government but the Government was not able to give it, and we could not make any appeal to the Centre. Another thing is that when the Interim Government was formed, His Excellency the Viceroy said that this Government would not interfere with Provincial Governments. If the Centre cannot interfere in cases where there is communal disturbance or there is famine, then we will have to consider what will happen to the people of those Provinces. I hope the Committee will take this into serious consideration so that steps may be taken to maintain peace throughout the country and also to prevent famines. Another thing that I want to bring to the notice of the Congress High Command through this Assembly is this. Somehow or other there is a feeling that this High Command is not sympathetic towards the people of Bengal: they want to have independence at the cost of Bengal. I hope this Committee will consider this aspect seriously so that Bengal may not be affected in future either by famine or by communal disturbances.

Mr Jaipal Singh (Bihar: General): Mr President, this is a very imposing list and I personally have no quarrel. I know the names are of eminent men that have been proposed by Mr Satyanarayan Sinha, but I do feel some concern, now that explanation has been given by Mr Rajagopalachariar that under (b) the President may add ten more persons to the Committee. That implies that he is leaving room for our absent friends. Had he pointed out that the President would have discretion to nominate members from parties or groups that has been left out in the twelve names that had already been proposed, I would not have anything to say. Looking at the list, it seems to me that the plan is not for unity but for uniformity. I would have liked to see, for instance, the names of persons like Dr Jayakar, Dr Ambedkar and Dr Deshmukh in the list.

The Hon'ble Sri C. Rajagopalachariar: Will you, Mr President, request the speaker to come closer to the microphone and speak? I am unable to hear him.

Mr Jaipal Singh: When I shouted yesterday, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant thought I was being too vehement, and I said to myself I would be a little mellow this morning. But, for the benefit of Mr Rajagopalachariar, I shall shout despite what Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant may feel. I will raise my voice for Mr Rajagopalachariar's benefit.

Mr President: It is not so much shouting that is required as speaking in front of the microphone.

Mr Jaipal Singh: If there were microphones all around, then I need not come near the microphone, but look at members on all sides, I submit that, when Mr Rajagopalachariar said that the ten members that the President would nominate subsequently were reserved for our absentee friends, I was concerned that no room had been left to accommodate sections, groups and parties who were not among the twelve people named herein. I know that as far as the fate of my own people is concerned, the temper of this House seems to be, as it has been in the past, that they should be permanently excluded from all the good things of life. This is a very important thing. That is the impression I get, although that may not be true. Less important committees may give us a fair deal—I do not know, but I see no reason why here also some tribal representation could not have been given. I am not moving an amendment, I am only expressing my opinion when I say that I would like to have seen persons of the eminence of Dr Jayakar, Dr Ambedkar and Dr Deshmukh on this Committee. I do think that they can render as good service as the twelve members who are named here. I am not moving an amendment, but I am bound to say that I am surprised that Tribal Areas are completely left out of the picture; so are our eminent men whose names I have already mentioned.

Sardar Harnam Singh (Punjab: Sikh): I do not propose to make a speech on this Resolution. But I do want to say that this is not a committee on which communal representation or tribal representation is very, very necessary. This Committee, as the Resolution states, is simply formed for the purpose of understanding the scope of the Union subjects. It is not a committee even for defining the scope of the Union subjects. Therefore, I put before the House that no member of this House should insist on communal or tribal representation. The best men of this House must come on this Committee to make a report to the House as to the compass and scope of the Union subjects, and when that report will be before the House, we will be in a position to make any suggestions that we may like.

Prof. N.G. Ranga (Madras: General): Mr President I wish to suggest that Dr Ambedkar's name should be included in this list, and I appeal to one of the members whose names are suggested to offer to withdraw in his favour.

The Hon'ble Sri C. Rajagopalachariar: Sir, I would beg of the House to look at it rather from the point of view which Shri Harnam Singh put before the House than from any other point of view. After all, if you once more read these names, you will find among them men who are absolutely non-partymen, who have given their time to considerations of issues and drafting difficulties and people who may more or less be described as experts in the art of bringing laws into existence. Clause (b) provides that the President may add ten more persons to the Committee. Now, the President is not invested with this authority for nothing. He is invested with this power to make up for defects. The President will consider the position when the

Muslim League members, who are now absent, come in. We will know then how the position stands. It is not intended really that the President should exercise this nomination power in an arbitrary manner. He is going to get the opinion of the Muslim League members when they join and get them to elect their representatives and they will come in.

There is another absent element, the States. The President will consider who will best represent the States in this particular task and take them in and, if there is room, I have no doubt the President will add other eminent constitutionalists who are in the House, some of whose names have been mentioned and then the Committee will be a strong Committee. Relying upon this, I ask the House to accept the Resolution as it stands, with the amendments proposed.

Mr President: I have now to put this Resolution to the vote of the House. Is it necessary to read out the Resolution once again? (Hon'ble members: No, no.)

An Hon'ble Member: What about Mr Ranga's amendment?

Mr President: Mr Ranga did not move any amendment. He only made a suggestion. I will now put the Resolution, as amended, to vote,

The Resolution, as amended, was adopted.

9. Representations of Harijans of Sind in the Constituent Assembly

Extract from a Letter from J.V. Gohil to Vallabhbhai Patel, 10 February 1947

Durga Das (Ed.), *Sardar Patel's Correspondence* (hereafter *SPC*), Vol. V, p. 305.

Sind: Inflammatory Propaganda

Even though we form 17 per cent of the total population of the Hindus of Sind, we have had no representation on the Sind Assembly and on other local bodies of Sind, except Karachi, during all these past ten years of Sind provincial autonomy. Strange as it may seem, no concrete and persistent efforts have been made by those in authority and by those who adorned the Assembly benches by the help of the votes of these Harijans and on behalf of them, to safeguard and secure these fundamental democratic rights to these people. The result is that they are, today nowhere directly represented by the Harijans themselves, as the Harijans of other provinces are....

10. Sardar Patel Clarifies Basis of Representation in the Constituent Assembly

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to J.V. Gohil, 13 February 1947

SPC, Vol. V, pp. 305–6.

New Delhi

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 10th instant along with a copy of your memorandum to the President of the Constituent Assembly.

The whole scheme of the Constituent Assembly is based on representation on a population basis. In the Government of India Act now in force, no recognition is given to the Scheduled

Castes in Sind, nor is there any such provision for them in the Poona Pact which formed part of the Act subsequently. The elections to the Constituent Assembly have been made in accordance with the document of 16 May, and no alteration can be made by anybody in the matter. Your grievances can be represented by the representatives of the Scheduled Castes in other provinces who are in a fairly large number in the Constituent Assembly. You may, therefore, prepare your memorandum and send it on to those representatives, or to the secretary of the Minority Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

J.V. Gohil Esq
President,
Sind Provincial Nationalist Harijan Party
Karachi.

11. People of Chittagong Hill Tracts Demand Representation and Protection

Letter from Chittagong Hill Tracts Hillmen Association to J.B. Kripalani, 18 February 1947.

All India Congress Committee Papers (hereafter AICC Papers), File No. CL-3/Part 2, 1946-7, NMML

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Hillmen Association

Memo No. 2

RANGAMATI
CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS.

To,
Acharya J.P. Kripalani,
Congress President
New Delhi

Sir,

I understand from press report that the first meeting of the Advisory Committee on fundamental rights, the protection of minorities and the administration of tribal and excluded areas will take place on the 27th instant in the Council House, New Delhi. But I extremely regret to point out that no accredited representative of the Chittagong Hill Tracts has been invited to represent the case of these frontier tracts in the Advisory Committee. However I take the liberty of placing before you for your kind perusal as well as for communicating the Advisory Committee, the demands of the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts regarding the oncoming constitutional changes of this area as embodied in the resolutions passed on 14.2.47 in the Working Committee of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Hillmen Association.

As President of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Hillmen Association, I am forwarding you the true copies of the following authentic documents of this Association:

1. Telegram to HE Lord Wavell
2. Do Hon'ble Pandit Nehru.
3. Resolutions of the meeting of the Working Committee passed on 14.2.47.

I earnestly hope, as President of the All India Congress Committee as well as a member of the Advisory Committee, you would be kind enough to consider the problem minutely. We the hill people of these frontier tracts have great confidence in the leadership of the Indian National Congress.

I beg to be favoured with a reply.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant.

Abani Ranjan Dewan

President, Chittagong Hill Tracts Hillmen Association.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Hillmen Association

RANGAMATI

CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS.

True copy

Telegram to HE Lord Wavell

His Excellency Lord Wavell

New Delhi

Your Excellency, be pleased to note and please communicate the Advisory Committee on fundamental rights of excluded and tribal areas Chittagong Hill Tracts strongly protests her amalgamation [*sic*] with Bengal because the people's customary laws, prescriptive rights, religion and very existence will be endangered. Chittagong Hill Tracts demands a confederation of constitutional Chakma, Bohmong and Mong States under the Union Government on the line Burma came to agreement with Shan, Chin and Kachin States.

Abani Ranjan Dewan

President, Chittagong Hill Tracts Hillmen Association.

17.2.47

True copy

Telegram to Hon'ble Pandit Nehru

Hon'ble Pandit Nehru

New Delhi

Please note and please communicate the Advisory Committee on excluded and tribal areas Chittagong Hill Tracts strongly protests her amalgamation [*sic*] with Bengal because the people's prescriptive rights, customary laws, religion and very existence will be endangered. Chittagong Hill Tracts demands a confederation of constitutional Chakma, Bohmong and Mong States on the line recently Burma came to agreement with Shan, Chin and Kachin States.

Abani Ranjan Dewan

President, Chittagong Hill Tracts

Hillmen Association.

17.2.47.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Hillmen Association

RANGAMATI

CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS.

True copies of the resolutions passed on 14.2.47 in the Working Committee of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Hillmen Association:

1. Resolved that it is the inalienable right of the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts to frame their own constitution without any compulsion, imposition, hindrance or any interference from outside as these tracts being tribal areas (according to the Hon'ble Pandit Nehru's definition of tribal areas as embodied in his letter of the 6th August 1946, New Delhi, addressed to the President of the Naga Hills National Council) 'are neither part of British India, nor of Burma, nor of an Indian State, nor of any foreign power.'
2. Resolved that the Hon'ble Pandit Nehru's momentous resolution wherein adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities, backward and tribal areas and depressed and other classes passed in the Constituent Assembly on the 22nd January 1947, should be the guiding principle of the Advisory Committee while dealing with the complicated problems of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the people shall consider the above part of the resolution of the Constituent Assembly as one of the most important clauses of their Magna Charta.
3. Resolved that the Chittagong Hill Tracts should enjoy equal democratic rights and privileges on the same footing with other parts of India along with their existing three tribal chiefs.
4. Resolved that the existing three Circles under the three tribal Chiefs including the reserved Forests be constituted as three constitutional States (Rajajukta Prajatantra) and in a group should have integration with the Union as an autonomous unit having relation as protectorate placing the following subjects (besides the union subjects) to the Centre.
Centre (vide para. 4 of the announcement of the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy, New Delhi, 16 May, 1946):
(A) Administration of higher justice.
(B) Higher and foreign education.
5. Resolved that if the revenue collected from these tracts is inadequate the Union Government should grant subsidy for raising the standard of living of the people as well as the time of emergency.
6. Resolved that this frontier area should be allowed one representative in the Executive Council of the Union Government to look after the interests of this singular area.
7. Resolved that this Association strongly protests the idea of unification of the Chittagong Hill Tracts with Bengal in any circumstances, in view of the fact that the hill people's customary laws, prescriptive rights, religion and their very existence will be endangered since Bengal is communal as well as a deficit province.
8. Resolved that the Advisory Committee on the fundamental rights of citizens, minorities, tribal and excluded areas should fully discuss the accredited representatives of the Chittagong Hill Tracts before any constitutional changes are being recommended to the Constituent Assembly and the Advisory Committee should co-opt one member

from this Association and one from the constitutional tribal Chiefs as accredited representatives of these tracts.

9. Resolved that the above resolutions be forwarded to the 19th Chiefs Conference...

12. 'Advisory Committee on Minorities: Five Sub-Committees Appointed'

The Tribune, 1 March 1947

New Delhi—At a meeting of the Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Excluded and Tribal Areas held yesterday at the Council hall, five sub-committees were appointed to deal with various subjects.

Following are the names of the members of the various sub-committees:

1. FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS SUB COMMITTEE: Acharya J.B. Kripalani (President), Mr M.R. Masani Professor K.T. Shah, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, L. Krishna Swamy Aiyar, Mr K.M. Munshi, Sardar Harnam Singh, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr B.R. Ambedkar, Mr Jairamdas Daulatram.
2. NORTH-EAST FRONTIER TRIBAL AREAS AND ASSAM EXCLUDED AND PARTIALLY EXCLUDED AREAS SUB-COMMITTEE: The Hon'ble Sriyut Gopinath Bardoloi (President), Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy, Mr Rup Nath Brahma, Mr Mayangnokcha: Mr A.V. Thakkar.
3. NORTH-WEST FRONTIER TRIBAL AREAS SUB-COMMITTEE: Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Khan Abdul Samad Khan, Mr Mehr Chand Khanna.
4. EXCLUDED AND PARTIALLY EXCLUDED AREAS SUB-COMMITTEE (except those in Assam): Mr A.V. Thakkar, Mr Jaipal Singh, Mr Devinder Nath Samanta, Mr Phool Bhan Shaha, Mr Jagjivan Ram, Dr Profulla Chandra Ghosh, Mr Raj Krishna Bose.
5. MINORITIES COMMITTEE: Mr Jagjivan Ram, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr B.R. Ambedkar, Sardar Jogendra Singh, Dr S.P. Mukherjee, Sardar Ujjal Singh, Sardar Harnam Singh, Bakshi Sir Tek Chand, Dr Gopi Chand Bhargava, Sir H.J. Khandekar, Mr P.R. Thakur, Sir Homi Mody, Dr H.C. Mookherjee; Shri P.K. Salve, Mr S.H. Prater, Mr F.R. Anthony, The Hon'ble Shri C. Rajagopalachariar, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Shri Jairamdas Daulatram, Mr R.K. Sidhwa, Mr Rup Nath Brahma, Mr M. Rutnaswamy, Mr M.V.H. Collins, Mr K.M. Munshi, Dr Alban D'Souza and the Hon'ble Pt Govind Ballabh Pant.

13. Questions about the Framing of a New Constitution

Letter from Constitutional Adviser to All Members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures, 17 March 1947

Home Political Department (Internal) [hereafter Home Poll (I)], File No. 83/47, NAI.

No. CA./18/Cons/47.

Constituent Assembly of India.

New Delhi

Sir,

In order to facilitate the work of framing a new Constitution before June, 1948, it is considered desirable to issue a questionnaire, bearing on the salient features of the Constitution, to all the

members of the various Provincial Legislatures and of the Central Legislature and to invite their individual views thereon.

2. Such a questionnaire is annexed to this letter. The questionnaire is divided into five parts, and in each part are set out a certain number of questions bearing on its subject-matter. Brief explanatory notes have been inserted under each question.

3. The questionnaire, as will be noticed, deals only with the Constitution of the Centre. But most of the questions will apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the provincial sphere also. You are therefore requested to give your answers both in regard to the Union Constitution and in regard to the Provincial Constitutions.

4. Your answers may kindly be sent so as to reach this office as early as possible and in any case before 10 April, 1947, as the matter is very urgent.

5. It is considered unnecessary to frame any questionnaire regarding Group Constitutions until the Sections have decided to set up such Constitutions.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
B.N. Rau
Constitutional Adviser.

Constitutional Assembly of India. Questionnaire

A.

Head of the Indian Union

1. What should be the designation of the Head of the Indian Union?

Note: In this and the following notes reference has been made to the constitutions of various countries. But it must be remembered that the United Kingdom and Ireland are not Federations and even South Africa is not a true Federation.

USA	}	President.
Switzerland		
Ireland		
Canada	}	The local Executive Head is the Governor General on behalf of His Majesty.
Australia		
South Africa		The local Executive Head is the Governor General.

B

Executive

12. What should be the nature and type of the Union Executive? Should it be of the British type (Parliamentary) or the American type (Non-parliamentary) or the Swiss type (mixed) or any other type?

Note: From the point of view of practical administration this is perhaps the most important question in the framing of the new Constitution. There are, as indicated in the questionnaire, three main types of Executives. In the British type, the Executive is responsible to the Legislature and has to resign on loss of confidence of the Legislature. In the American type, the Executive is not responsible to the Legislature; each derives its authority from the people direct and is

not responsible to the other. In the Swiss type, the Executive is elected by the Legislature for a term of 4 years (which is also the life of the Legislature) and no question of resignation during the term arises. In the Irish Free State Constitution of 1922, we find a fourth type: there was a ministry of the British type plus certain additional Ministers appointed rather on the Swiss plan—that is to say, they were nominated by the Dail on the recommendation of a special committee, they held office for the term of the Dail, and were responsible only to the Dail. The British type is the one with which we are most familiar in India and its features are well-known. The main features of the Swiss type are (1) It gives all sections a chance of being represented in the Executive, the election being by proportional representation (2) it enables the Ministry to concentrate on the real problems of the country for a fixed term of 4 years without being distracted by motions of no-confidence (3) it ensures a substantial degree of responsibility to the Legislature inasmuch as the Executive is not only elected by the Legislature but is also subject to its directions. The Irish Free State type had a short life and has been abandoned in the new Irish Constitution, which has adopted the British type.

UK and the Dominions	By convention the Executive (Cabinet) is responsible to the Legislature and retains office so long as it enjoys the confidence of the Legislature.
USA	The President is the head of the Federal Executive with a Cabinet of 10 heads of departments called Secretaries appointed by him, subject to the nominal approval of the Senate and answerable only to him. Executive not responsible to the Legislature. Non-parliamentary.
Switzerland	The Federal Council of 7 members elected by the Legislature (by proportional representation) once in 4 years. They are eligible for re-election. Not more than one is elected from the same canton. A mixture of Parliamentary and Non-Parliamentary.
Ireland	Ireland has put into statutory form what in UK is based on convention. The Government consists of 7 to 15 members appointed by the President. One of them acts as Prime Minister, and another as Deputy Prime Minister. Responsible to Dail Eireann, though the Ministers may be chosen from both the houses, at most two from the Senate. Parliamentary.

C

Legislature

20. Should the Union Legislature have a single Chamber or two Chambers?

Note: Second Chambers are set up for various reasons: for example, to represent special interests or classes as in Ireland; as a check on hasty and ill-conceived legislation of the lower House as in France; to provide equal representation to the different Constituent Units of a federation as in USA. It may provide for a continuous term of office, only a portion of the members retiring at regular interval as in USA, and the old French Constitution. This secures the representation of past as well as current opinion and helps in maintaining continuity in public policy.

There is a growing opposition to the Second Chamber for various reasons, **namely**, (1) it may tend to be reactionary, over-conservative and check urgently-needed but radical reforms,

(2) it may be instrumental in delaying legislation, (3) it tends to be undemocratic since it is very difficult to constitute a truly democratic Second Chamber on a different basis from the lower Chamber, (4) it is expensive to the country, and politically-backward countries also lack able statesmen to man a Second Chamber properly.

UK and the Dominions	All bicameral, (Two Chambers).
UK	House of Lords, (Upper House). House of Commons, (Lower House).
Canada	Senate, (Upper House). House of Commons, (Lower House).
Australia	Senate, (Upper House). House of Representatives, (Lower House).
South Africa	Senate, (Upper House). House of Assembly, (Lower House).
USA	Bicameral: Senate, (Upper House) and House of Representatives, (Lower House).
Switzerland	Bicameral: Council of States, (Upper House) and National Council (Lower House).
Ireland	Bicameral: Seanad Eireann, (Upper House) and Dail Eireann, (Lower House).

D Judiciary

26. Should there be a separate chain of courts to administer Union Laws?

Note: In USA, there is a separate chain of Federal Courts, but not in Canada, Australia or Switzerland.

USA	Under the constitution the judicial power of the United States is vested in a Supreme Court, and in such inferior courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. There are, at present, two sets of inferior federal courts, namely, the Federal District Courts and the Circuit Courts of Appeal. The country is divided into 83 districts, each State constituting at least one district. From the Federal Courts of these districts there is an appeal to Circuit Courts, which are ten in number. There are also two special courts, namely, the Court of Claims and the Court of Customs Appeals. In certain cases, however, the State courts may be, and are, permitted, in the exercise of the jurisdiction vested in them by the Constitution or laws of their respective States, to deal with causes which are within the federal judicial power. But their jurisdiction in such cases may be qualified by the right of the defendant to have the cause removed before trial into a Federal Court, or after trial the case may be taken by appeal to the Federal Supreme Court.
Australia	The judicial power of the Commonwealth is vested in a Federal Supreme Court, called the High Court of Australia, and 'in such other federal courts as the Parliament creates, and in such other courts as it invests with federal jurisdiction'. The parliament is also empowered to make laws investing any court of a State with federal jurisdiction. Thus, the constitution has left to the discretion of the Parliament the determination of the degree to which the agency of the State courts is to be utilized for the administration of federal laws. Under the Judiciary Act of 1903, as

amended from time to time, the several courts of the States are vested with federal jurisdiction in matters not within the exclusive jurisdiction of the High Court, and there is a right of appeal from these courts to the High Court.

Canada Under the constitution the Canadian Parliament is empowered to establish a General Court of Appeal for Canada and other courts for the better administration of the laws of Canada. In the exercise of these powers, the Canadian Parliament has set up a Supreme Court of Appeal and an Exchequer Court. In other respects, the administration of justice, including the constitution, maintenance and organization of civil and criminal courts and civil procedure is a Provincial subject while criminal law and procedure are assigned to the Federation. It may be noted that the Constitution vests the Governor-General with power to appoint the Judges of the superior, district, and country courts of each province, subject to certain exceptions.

14. Memorandum on Minorities by Rajkumari Amrit Kaur

20 March 1947.

B. Shiva Rao, ed., *The Framing of India's Constitution*, Vol. II, pp. 309–12.

I VENTURE TO SUBMIT this short memorandum as a citizen of India. I hold that every question in connection with the framing of a just and righteous constitution for our country should be looked upon, by and large, from the point of view of a citizen. If this standpoint is fundamentally correct it follows that the primary duty of the committee appointed to look into the problem of minorities is to suggest such ways and means as will help to eradicate the evil of separatism rather than expedients or palliatives which might, in the long run, only contribute to its perpetuation.

There is no gainsaying the fact that foreign domination has been one of the main causes, if not the main cause, of creating internal dissensions between the two major communities. But now that the foreign power is definitely leaving, it behoves us more than ever before to turn the search light inwards. Such means as the British employed, for example, separate electorates, must be in the realm of offices, honour, and other things, side by side with an ignorant and impoverished populace, may not only *not* be tolerated by us but their continuance must be made impossible in the future. At the same time, it cannot be denied that whatever seeds of dissension were sown by the foreign rulers, the soil that nourished them and has allowed them to assume the menacing aspect they now bear is ours. The greater fault therefore is ours.

Personally I regret that the question of minorities was not made a part of the work of the committee appointed to draft fundamental rights. If the latter are broad-based and if suitable provision is made therein for the machinery to enforce them, they should really give to the individual as well to the community to which he belongs all the protection he or it needs. Freedom in all spheres of life, consistent with the moral law, protection of life and property, perfect equality before the law and in society, unadulterated justice and, above all, full, free and equal opportunities for education and service are all that human beings and communities need for both individual and social growth. I am more than ever convinced that in the stand taken by the majority of educated women in the matter of refusal to ask for any special privileges for themselves in any sphere of life is wholly correct. Women may be said technically to be the largest single minority in India. Not only have custom and usage dealt harshly with us, but even the law has militated and still continues to militate against us. But we do not and must

never look upon ourselves as anything but an integral part of the whole, nor must we claim any privileges. Equality before the law and in society and equal opportunities for education and service are all we claim as human beings, and I believe that human beings and I believe that in the proper fulfillment of our duties as citizens—and duties must go hand in hand with rights—lies our best safeguard.

Although a member of a small and financially poor community, I appeal to its members to eschew privileges. Such an attitude would be wholly in keeping with the spirit of the teachings of Jesus Christ. A community that can boast the highest percentage in comparison with any other in the sphere of education among women and which is unhampered by such social injustices as exist elsewhere in the forms of *purdah*, polygamy, untouchability and laws of inheritance cannot or should not be afraid to rely for its progress mainly on opportunities for service in a state where human rights are fully guaranteed. Privileges and safeguards really weaken those that demand them. They are a definite bar to unity, without which there is no peace, as also to efficiency without which the standards of good governance are lowered. Axiomatically there is no reason why the interests of any individual or community should not be safe in the hands of a good person or persons, irrespective of their personal religion.

Joint electorates will help to a large extent to create this confidence and must be embodied in the Constitution.

Rather than say for how long any safeguards are necessary I would plead with the minorities to say that the necessity for safeguards should only be considered after a period of, say, five or seven years, if their trust in the majority communities has, in this interval, been proved to be wholly unjustified.

Trust in the goodness of men is the best way of invoking generosity in them. I am, therefore, of opinion that no minority should demand any safeguards but should be brave enough to rely solely on the goodwill of the majority and its own inherent moral strength. Nevertheless it is up to the majority communities to inspire the necessary confidence in the minorities as to enable them to adopt this attitude. The larger responsibility is really theirs. No constitution, however carefully worded and framed can guarantee the absence of strife if there is no good-will among the parties concerned. The ideal of men living happily and at peace with each other definitely implies the rule of reason instead of passion. Bitterness, prejudice and dissension are negative and destructive, but they exist in our land today. Clemency, compassion and consideration are positive virtues without which there can be no human understanding and, therefore, no hope of building up solidarity and unity.

It is a big tragedy that the task of framing a constitution has come to us at a time when hatred and mistrust dominate the minds of men. But we may not forget that underneath man's brutish passions, in spite of greed and ignorance, he is a reasoning being. Passions rage and flame and destroy, as they are doing today, but they will also exhaust themselves, and man does inherently prefer to live in keeping with the dignity of a human being rather than follow the law of the jungle.

While consistently holding that safeguards for minorities are wholly undesirable, I nevertheless fear that the appeal for a non-demand of all such will today be a lone cry. Having regard to the tense atmosphere in which we live and having said that it is up to the majority communities to inspire the necessary confidence in the minorities; I venture to submit a few suggestions for their consideration. These suggestions naturally carry no legal knowledge or authority but are only in the nature of a way of approach to the solution of this vexed question.

Would it not be wise for the majority communities to consider the solution of the problem mainly in terms of division of responsibility and power? Division of territory and/or exchange of populations do not really go to the root of the matter. In the long run these expedients might even serve to separate rather than unite. It should, however, be possible to banish fear, restore confidence and generate goodwill by the sharing of power, on a population basis, both at the Centre and in the Provinces. For example, important and not so important portfolios may in turn be held by members of the different communities according as their population and importance at the Centre and in a particular province merit.

While the Legislative Assembly is elected on a system of joint electorates there could be a Senate or Board of Members elected by the different communities in which no community can have more than one vote. This body could veto by a majority any measure which it felt was not for the general good. At the same time, no one community should be allowed to stand in the way of other communities wishing to carry out projects, the veto in that case applying only to the community concerned.

As to what are or are not communal questions there might be a tribunal constituted at the Centre to decide the issue.

The Senate or Board or some other body may be appointed to see that the members of all communities have a reasonable chance given them in all services beginning from the lowest sphere to the highest. But in order to ensure maximum efficiency it should be a *sine qua non* that promotion shall be only and strictly on the basis of integrity and merit. I place integrity advisedly before merit because high standards of public morality must be maintained if the State is to be a great moral agency.

To this end, I am quite certain that in drawing up a code of fundamental rights there should also be drawn up a code of duties of citizens. Rights should really follow duties, a wise axiom which is lost sight of in the maze of fear and suspicion in which today we live and move and have our being.

Chapter 2. Political Developments in Early 1947

1. Congress Socialist Party and Hindu Mahasabha Oppose 6 December Statement

Letter from Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 1 January 1947

Nicholas Mansergh (Ed.), *Constitutional Relations between Great Britain and India: Transfer of Power* (hereafter *TOP*), 1942–47, Vol. IX, pp. 434–40.

PRIVATE AND SECRET
NEW DELHI

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE,

1. I had a quick trip back and got here on Monday evening. As a result, I had a full day with Colville who went to Bombay on Christmas day.
2. The Constituent Assembly has adjourned to meet again on the 20th January for a ten-day session. Nehru's resolution was not pressed to a division in the end, but has been left over in the hopes that the Muslim League may be into the Assembly by then. I think it is probably true that there is certain realization now coming over some of the Congress leaders that they cannot drive ahead and frame a constitution for India unless they can take along with them the Muslim League and the Princes. The rank and file of the Constituent Assembly members are unwilling to accept this; but forceful speeches by Jayakar and by Ambedkar had the result of postponing a decision both on Nehru's resolution and on the important Procedural Sub-Committee's report.
3. There is at the moment a struggle going on in the Congress between the centre party who want to get His Majesty's Government's statement of 6th December accepted without qualification, as against the left-wing and extreme right-wing who both want to reject it. I do not think that there is any real chance of a clear-cut decision in favour of acceptance.

Jai Prakash Narain has lately been making most objectionable speeches (I enclose a statement he made a couple of days ago to a press conference in Delhi), and I intend to take this up with Nehru and Patel. It is an impossible position for a member of the Working Committee of the Congress, which now forms the major party in the Government, to talk like this; and he should either be expelled or be curbed. The Hindu Mahasabha has also no wish to compromise with the Muslims, and a number of their speeches in the Constituent Assembly were completely communal. The Mahasabha has just concluded a militant annual session in the United Provinces.

4. I have been resuming my usual interviews with members of the Cabinet, but it is clear that most of them are not at present really interested in administering the country. Politics has become such an obsession, and takes up so much of their time that nothing is being done in many departments. This is probably inevitable, however unfortunate

it may be, but is making the few members who do take an interest in their work very restive. Bhabha, for example complained to me that all his business friends told him that the Government was not functioning properly, and that administrative decisions were not being taken. He was very unhappy about the position, and, I believe, would be quite glad to get out of the Government.

5. One of the matters on which I intend to speak to Nehru when I see him today is the need of a Cabinet Sub-Committee to recommend appointments to India's diplomatic posts abroad. These are now of considerable importance, and their number is steadily increasing. So far, Nehru has tried to retain in his own hands the authority to recommend, and this is obviously undesirable. He has just come up with a most unsuitable proposal for India's Agent in Ceylon, a man who was one of Subhas Chandra Bose's chief assistants in Singapore during the war.
6. You will remember that I discussed with you the need of strengthening the UK High Commissioner's staff in India for various purposes. Shone has shown me the despatch which he has sent to the Cabinet Offices on this subject, asking for authority to recruit 15 persons from the Secretary of State's Services in India. I entirely agree with his desire to expand immediately, and I think it is an obvious solution that he should be able to take over some members of the Services now in India. I hope you will be able to help him in getting what he wants.

With best wishes for the New Year.

2. 'Gandhiji Supports Assam's Stand'

National Herald, 1 January 1947.

Srirampur, 29 Dec.—'If you don't commit suicide nobody can kill you,' said Mahatma Gandhi to Mr Gopinath Bardoloi, Premier of Assam, who had an interview with Gandhiji today in connection with the question of Assam's going into sections.

Mr Bardoloi, accompanied by Mrs Baidyanath Mukerji, Supply Minister, Mr Siddhinath Sharma, secretary of the Assam Congress and Mr Mahendra Mohan Chaudhury, Secretary of the Assam Congress Parliamentary Party, arrived in Srirampur from Chaumuhani shortly after midday and had discussion with Gandhiji for about two hours. Acharya Kripalani, Congress President and Mr Shankarrao Deo were also present during the latter part of discussion.

Later, the leaders of Assam had an interview with Pandit Nehru.

Mr Bardoloi told the Associated Press of India that they had discussion about the general political situation in the country with particular reference to Assam's going into sections. Mr Bardoloi added that Gandhiji had approved the stand taken by the Assam Congress Committee. They must be given the right to frame their constitution. Mr Bardoloi said.

Mr Bardoloi and other Assam Congress leaders left for Chaumuhani later in the afternoon en route to Assam.—API



3. 6 December Statement Not an Easy Path to Pakistan

Extracts from a Letter from Pethick-Lawrence to Wavell, 2 January 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 444–5.

PRIVATE AND SECRET
 INDIA OFFICE

I think it is time that I resumed my series of weekly letters to you, although I have little of much significance to tell you on this occasion. This may be due partly to the fact that Christmas brought to us here, as I hope it did to you, a very welcome even if only a partial relaxation of the strain of the past few weeks, and partly to the continued presence of Abell who, I presume, is keeping you in touch, so far as is possible, with developments in regard to the vital matters at present under consideration here.

2. As he may have told you, the result of our deliberations with you after the departure of the Indian Representatives was brought by the Prime Minister before the Cabinet on Tuesday last (31st December). The upshot of the discussion was that the Cabinet wished the Statement to be redrafted and its implications further considered.

3. Officials of the Cabinet Office and this Office have since been hard at work on the modification of the terms of the Statement in the light of the Cabinet's views and Abell has taken part in their deliberations. A revised draft is to be considered by the India and Burma Committee tomorrow (Friday) with a view to its coming before the Cabinet again on Tuesday next....

9. I hope that Jinnah does not interpret our Statement of 6th December to mean that if he only sits back and does nothing he will get his Pakistan. It may also be interpreted to mean a Provincial autonomy which would be far less to his liking. I agree with you that Pakistan is a quite unworkable proposition....

4. Nehru Moves Resolution for Acceptance of HMG's 6 December Statement

Nehru's Speech at the AICC Meeting Held at New Delhi, 5 January 1947
Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series (hereafter *SWJN*) Vol. I, pp. 38–40.

Friends and Comrades, I am now going to bring before you a resolution recommending acceptance of the British Government's statement of 6 December. It is a resolution drafted before Mahatma Gandhi at Comilla and passed by the Working Committee. I know there is controversy over the matter. Still I would request you to consider the resolution in the light of the present circumstances and accept it. This is the resolution I move for your consideration and acceptance....

Friends, it is a simple, straightforward resolution. There is no sign of weakness in it; if there was the least suspicion of weakness, I would not have brought it before you or commended it to your acceptance.

The main question before us is how to keep the Constituent Assembly alive and extract from it the greatest possible good for the country. By accepting the statement of 6 December, we would leave the door open for the League to enter and put forward their point of view. If we do not accept that statement it will give an opportunity to the British Government to change

or withdraw their earlier statement of 16 May, with the result that the Constituent Assembly may be changed radically.

Obstacles have been put in the path of the Constituent Assembly in the past. We have overcome them and we should do everything in our power hereafter to prevent attempts to sabotage this great weapon which we can use to our advantage.

In my speech at Meerut I had referred to the crisis towards which I felt inside the Interim Government the Congress Ministries were fast moving. The attitude of the British Government was adversely affecting the work of the Interim Government. Those statements and the fears I had expressed then are now coming true. At the time of my earlier speech the British Government could not have claimed success in impeding our work but now the British Government are in a position to make that claim and substantiate it. The British Government's actions have created complications. A grave situation has been created and the resolution before the House which has been prepared with great care and deliberation is a simple, straightforward one meant to meet that situation.

The House is to decide whether to accept the statement of 6 December or not. This question has proved to be a headache. We are not in the habit of accepting things thrust upon us against our will. We were sorely tempted to accept the challenge contained in this statement and answer it with all the force at our command. But we realized the danger of allowing our emotions to overpower us.

Many forces have lined up against us. We should advance cautiously to meet and overcome those forces and it is this consideration that has prompted the Working Committee to bring the resolution before the House.

The resolution accepts the statement. Some may feel that this is a confession of weakness. I deny that our fight has taken on a new form with the meeting of the Constituent Assembly and our aim should be to see that the Assembly is not postponed or shelved. It has not yet begun to function in fullness but I hope that when it meets after a fortnight it will begin to function as it should.

The significant point about the Assembly is not whether it is sovereign or not, but that it cannot be dissolved by the British Government except by the use of force. When the British Government choose to use force in that way, then it will be time for us to decide how to face it. The primary point to bear in mind is that the Constituent Assembly has begun to function since 9 December and though it is not the Assembly of our ideals, yet it can be utilized as a weapon to achieve our independence. Therefore, it becomes absolutely essential and important to prevent attempts to postpone or shelve it. It has life in it and is capable of taking us far on the road to independence.

Our opponents have failed in their effort to shelve it, and so have adopted the alternative of putting obstacles in its way and have issued the statement of 6 December. Since 1919 we have been depending entirely on our strength and have looked to the people of India and not to the British Government to achieve our objective.

We have no desire to add to the number of enemies ranged against us at this critical stage of our fight. Our enemies rely entirely on the British Government and the British Government rely on them to do mischief in India. But even the combination of the two has not the strength to fight us face to face. And so they resort to subterfuges and create obstacles in our way.

The Muslim League desired that the Constituent Assembly should not continue and that the country should revert to the order of things that prevailed eight or nine months

ago. If that desire materialises we shall meet that situation as we think best. But all our energies should now be bent on going ahead with the Constituent Assembly with strength and firmness. It is possible that we may have to fight on a different front and we should be prepared for that too. By passing this resolution we will show to the world that we do not intend to work behind closed doors. And in order to demonstrate our desire to keep the doors open, we do many unpleasant things and postpone many decisions which we would like to take without delay. We do not want to give an opportunity to anyone to say that we have broken the British plan.

It is true that Assam has a mandate to oppose sections and groups and Assam can fight if it wants. But I would like to remind you that battles are won not by the personal courage of one or two but by the cooperation of many thousands and by the mobilization and right use of resources. At the present time our object should be to outmanoeuvre our opponents. The time may come when Assam will have to fight; that fight will not be single-handed but will be waged with the whole of India behind them.

In conclusion, again I refer to my statement at Meerut that I did not know how long I and my colleagues would continue in the Interim Government. I still do not know how long we shall remain there. People have been talking of the final fight for independence. I feel, however, that that fight is even now in progress. Possibly that fight will have to be intensified in the near future but the present situation is such as to call for restraint of language and calm deliberation before action. *Jai Hind.*

5. Congress Accepts HMG's Statement of 6 December 1946

Statement by All India Congress Committee, 5 January 1947

AICC Papers, File No. G-30/1946, Item 5, NMML.

The AICC having considered the events that have taken place in the country since the Meerut Session of the Congress in November last, the statement issued by the British Government on 6 December, 1946, and the statement of the Working Committee of 22 December, 1946, advises Congressmen as follows:

1. The AICC endorses the statement of the Working Committee of 22 December, 1946, and expresses its agreement with the views contained therein.
2. While the Congress has always been agreeable to making a reference to the Federal Court on the question of interpretation in dispute, such a reference has become purposeless and undesirable owing to recent announcements made on behalf of the British Government. A reference could only be made on an agreed basis, the parties concerned agreeing to abide by the decision given.
3. The AICC is firmly of opinion that the constitution for a free and independent India should be framed by the people of India on the basis of as wide an agreement as possible. There must be no interference whatsoever by any external authority, and no compulsion of any province or part of a province by another province. The AICC realizes and appreciates the difficulties placed in the way of some provinces, notably Assam and the NWFP and the Sikhs in the Punjab, by the British Cabinet's scheme of 16 May, 1946, and more especially by the interpretation put upon it by the British Government in their statement of 6 December, 1946. The Congress cannot be a party

to any such compulsion or imposition against the will of the people concerned, a principle which the British Government have themselves recognized.

4. The AICC is anxious that the Constituent Assembly should proceed with the work of framing a constitution for free India with the goodwill of all parties concerned and, with a view to removing the difficulties that have arisen owing to varying interpretations, agree to advise action in accordance with the interpretation of the British Government in regard to the procedure to be followed in the sections. It must be clearly understood, however, that this must not involve any compulsion of a province and that the rights of the Sikhs in the Punjab should not be jeopardised. In the event of any attempt at such compulsion, a province or part of a province has the right to take such action as may be deemed necessary in order to give effect to the wishes of the people concerned. The future course of action will depend upon the developments that take place and the AICC therefore directs the Working Committee to advise upon it, whenever circumstances so require, keeping in view the basic principle of provincial autonomy.

6. 'Surrender of Rights of the Constituent Assembly: Bose'

National Herald, 5 January 1947.

CALCUTTA. 4 Jan. Mr Sarat Chandra Bose, who owing to illness is unable to attend the Congress Working Committee meeting, has telegraphed to the Congress President requesting the AICC to reject the British Government interpretation of 6 December of paragraph 19(v) of the Cabinet Mission's statement of 16 May.

'Acceptance of the British Government's interpretation would mean an ignoble surrender of rights of the Constituent Assembly and end of provincial autonomy.' Mr Bose asserted.—API

7. 'Acceptance of 6 December Statement Recommended: Nehru's Resolution before AICC'

The Hindustan Times, 6 January 1947.

NEW DELHI, Sunday—The All-India Congress Committee debated for six hours today the Working Committee's resolution moved by Pandit Nehru advising acceptance of the British Government's interpretation regarding procedure for the meeting of the Sections of the Constituent Assembly. Twenty-one members participated in the debate a majority of them either opposed the resolution or proposed amendments to it. Further debate was adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The resolution makes it clear that acceptance of the procedure in the Sections 'must not involve any compulsion of a province and that the rights of the Sikhs in the Punjab should not be jeopardized.' It adds that 'in the event of any attempt at such compulsion a province or a part of a province has the right to take such action as may be deemed necessary in order to give effect to the wishes of the people concerned.'

Acharya Kripalani in his opening remarks and Pandit Nehru in moving the resolution made it clear that they were accepting the interpretation not because they

had any faith in the good intentions of the British Government or of the Muslim League, but because they did not wish to provide an excuse for their opponents to wreck the plan of the Constituent Assembly on the pretext that the Congress had not accepted the State Paper of 16 May. It was, they added, a demonstration of the strength and not of the weakness of the Congress.

The proceedings began punctually at 3 p.m. in the Constitution Club hall with Acharya Kripalani in the Chair. A dais had been put up in the Hall and only the President and the General Secretaries sat on it. A picture of the 'Architect of the Nation,' Mahatma Gandhi and the Tri-colour provided attractive back ground to the dais.

From the point of view of the people of Delhi the venue of the meeting in New Delhi was disappointing but it proved an ideal setting for a business session. Some hundreds of people were able, however, to listen to the speech as they were relayed outside the Hall. Only the arrangements for the Press left much to be desired.

Aung San Present

All the seats reserved for the members of the AICC were occupied, although only half the Committee strength was present. Apparently more were not expected at such a short notice especially as many of them had only recently left Delhi after attending the session of the Constituent Assembly. Among the distinguished visitors were U. Aung San, Mr G.M. Syed, Mr Abdul Majid Sindhi and Mr Talpar. Acharya Kripalani was garlanded by Mr Asaf Ali on behalf of the Delhi Provincial Congress Committee.

Opening the proceedings, the president made an objective report on the happenings since the Congress session at Meerut, but it was in his typical style—blunt, half humorous and half cynical. He amused the audience by having an occasional joke at the expense of Congressmen as a whole when he called them 'ahimsa wadis' and 'satyawadis' who were 'very polite and overconsiderate to others'. This, he said particularly in reference to the way they accepted Mr Attlee's invitation for talks in London and added his personal regret that their representative had done so.

Acharya Kripalani's theme was that the Britishers could not change their habits and they had produced another hat-trick in the form of the Statement of 6 December. He characterized that so-called interpretation 'a big change' and reminded the House that Gandhiji had his doubts about British intentions, but had allowed the Working Committee to act according to its light. Following that the light had come up against a wall and the meeting today had been called to remove that obstacle.

The President 'made equally devastating references to the Muslim League which he said was acting under the Viceroy's protection and which was fighting the British Government's battle.' He added amidst cheers: 'The British Government is very fortunate. Its battles are always fought by other people. It happened in the two world wars; is happening in India.'

Finally Acharya Kripalani said the issue before them was how to act in a way that their own interest might not be jeopardized and that they might be able to take advantage of the machinery of the Constituent Assembly he concluded: 'No one can undermine the principle of provincial autonomy but let us not cry before we are hurt.'

Pandit Nehru moved the resolution on behalf of the Working Committee—He mentioned that they had given every anxious and deep thought and had consulted their elders (meaning Mahatma Gandhi). The main theme of his speech was that the Constituent Assembly would be a powerful weapon in their struggle for independence and that it should be saved being wrecked. He asked the Houses to accept the British Government's latest interpretation not

because of any faith in the good intentions of the Government or of the League. In fact they could presume only evil intentions in regard to both.

The Muslim League did not want withdrawal of British power and was building its case on British support, continued Pandit Nehru, but the Congress genuinely wanted India's freedom; they were opening the doors of the Constitution Assembly for the League and would welcome their co-operation. They had postponed decisions on important matters in the Constituent Assembly in the same spirit. It was not a sign of their weakness but of their strength. He did not wish the British Government or the League to accuse the Congress of having wrecked the Scheme of 16 May. But the British Government had in their own Statement of 6 December accepted the principle of 'no imposition and no compulsion.' He therefore appealed to Assam, the Frontier and the Sikhs to take a reasonable view. The representatives of Assam were free to carry out the mandate of their people. He would wish them to do so. But the question was at what stage. He would not like Assam to isolate itself by premature action. The present occasion demanded that the enemies should be out manoeuvred, and the resolution would help them to do that.

The debate was lively. Since the movers of amendments got priority a majority of those who spoke opposed the resolution. Only three speakers gave unqualified support to the resolution. They were Mr Shankar Rao Deo, Mr Hifzul Rahman and Pandit G.B. Pant.

The opposition was led by Mr Purushottamdas Tandon who in a forceful speech contended that acceptance of the Statement of 6 December was inconsistent with the fundamental principles of provincial autonomy. The socialist view was put forward by Dr Ram Manohar Lohia who pleaded that only a revolutionary struggle would bring about freedom.

Among the numerous amendments the one that attracted attention was that put forth by Mr R.K. Sidhwa for an addendum to the resolution stating that the Constituent Assembly alone shall decide any future dispute regarding interpretation of the Statement of 16 May. Pandit Nehru raised objection to the amendment, but President Kripalani held it in order declaring that since the British Government's Statement of 6 December had suggested that future disputes be referred to the Federal Court it was open to the AICC to suggest that the Constituent Assembly shall be the final arbiter.

Mr Abdur Samad Khan, leader of Baluchistan, moved that Baluchistan and Sind be added along with Assam and NWFP in the resolution. His contention was that these two provinces would resist any attempt to settle their constitution in a Group. Even if the Congress did not back them the people of Baluchistan would not agree to any one drawing up their constitution except the people of the province.

The general trend of the speeches opposing the resolution was that the British Government was insincere and that the Muslim League was merely acting as the tool of British imperialism.

The debate will be concluded tomorrow and it is expected that the Working Committee's resolution will be passed by a comfortable majority. It is possible that one or two amendments will be accepted.

8. Nehru's Comments on the Grouping Plan

Speech at the AICC Meeting in New Delhi, 6 January 1947

SWJN, Vol. I, pp. 41-3.

I agree with most of what Mr Jayaprakash Narayan has said except with regard to the conclusions drawn by him. The resolution has been drawn up after serious thought, but I would not

dogmatize about the results that would flow from the acceptance of this resolution. It might cause harm; there is always this possibility.

Congress is strong enough to wipe the slate clean and start afresh. But I am at the same time grieved to see signs of internal organizational weakness. The strength of the Congress has so long rested on the fact that though Congressmen debated and deliberated and sometimes differed over issues, once a decision was reached, all accepted it loyally and followed it unwaveringly. Things are different now. I agree that one way of curing internal weakness and reestablishing unity is to launch a struggle, but I am not in favour of starting a major struggle merely in order to maintain structural or organizational unity.

Mr Jayaprakash Narayan has disputed the idea that the British are quitting. But my belief that they are quitting is based not on the desire of the British but on the compulsion of events which is forcing and hastening their departure. One of the main pillars on which the British Government rests in India is the Civil Service and that Civil Service is disappearing before our eyes. But the problem now is not merely to get rid of the foreign power but to prepare a concrete picture of what should take its place. This is the objective which the resolution before the House is intended to achieve.

I advise Assam to make a positive and constructive approach, and assure that the resolution will give it strength. I am quite alive to the dangers that confront Assam, but I would commend the resolution to its acceptance because it is in the interests of the province to do so.

Dr Lohia has dealt at length with the Naga Hills. It is true that we can help the people of those hills, but I refuse to accept the proposition that the battle of Indian independence should be fought on the Naga Hills. I appeal for a more positive and fuller approach to the problem.

Regarding Mr Jayaprakash Narayan's criticism of the AICC on the ground that it always approves the Working Committee's decisions, I may say this is not a matter for surprise. The Working Committee after all represents the mind of the AICC and so long as it enjoys the confidence of the AICC its decisions or proposals must naturally be acceptable to the AICC. Personally I will like nothing better than that the Working Committee be changed every time a fresh lead is required to meet a new situation. I declare that the Congress is not going to commit itself at the present moment to any reference to the Federal Court or to any authority.

I am glad of this opportunity to refer to this paragraph. It is a paragraph which is likely to mislead people. It says as a fact that the Congress have agreed already to it. Exactly when the Congress agreed to this or in what form is not clear. What has happened in the past few months is that on many occasions when any question or dispute arose we have often said generally—and we said so at Simla—that we are prepared to refer any specific matter of dispute to an impartial arbitrator whether it is the International Hague Court or any court of justice. Once or twice we also said that if there is difficulty about interpretation, we are prepared to refer it to some authority like the Federal Court. These were general statements we made, and normally speaking we agree to abide by them. But the way in which it has been put in this statement, as if a formal statement was made to us and we agreed, is completely wrong.

Apart from this, in view of recent developments and the statement of 6 December, which produces a new situation, I am not prepared to admit for an instant that we have agreed to any future procedure about references. Whatever the future brings we shall have to consider it. I should like to make it perfectly clear that we are giving no assurance about any references in regard to any other matters to the Federal Court. We find that everything we say is being twisted and distorted and brought against us in the future. We are not going to commit ourselves at

the present moment to any reference to the Federal Court or to any other authority. We shall decide—or the Constituent Assembly shall decide—as we think best in the circumstances.

I accept Mr Abdus Samad Khan's amendment for the inclusion of Baluchistan in NWFP and Sikhs in the Punjab mentioned in the paragraph 3 of the resolution expressing appreciation of the difficulties placed in the way of provinces by the British Cabinet Scheme of 16 May. I oppose other amendments.

9. Bardoloi's Proposal That Assam Frame Her Own Constitution

Extract from a Letter from A. Clow to Wavell, 6 January 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 463–4.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, SHILLONG

2. Bardoloi had a long talk with me on his return from the Conference with Gandhi, Nehru, (whom I met at Allahabad) and others. We talked mainly of the objections to Assam going into the Bengal–Assam Section of the Constituent Assembly. He said that:

- (1) he recognized the need for economic arrangements with Bengal.
- (2) his main objection was that Assam would have a constitution framed by Bengal;
- (3) she would not then be able to vote herself out of the group;
- (4) Assam ought therefore [to] have liberty to frame her own constitution and then reach agreement with Bengal.

3. I told him that I could not conceive of a constitution being framed which would prevent the people of Assam, if they so wanted, from voting themselves out; but he disagreed. He was, as always, rather nebulous in expression but I inferred that he was apprehensive that the various sections of the population would get separate representation. As Bourne said in his letter of 15th June, the opposition comes mainly from the Caste Hindus of the Assam Valley. At present the Caste Hindus of the province, although they are not only about a third of population, and particularly those of the Assam Valley, dominate the Government and the Legislature. The hill tribes are mostly unrepresented because so many live in the excluded areas. Those in other areas have 4 seats, but 2 of these are in Shillong where the large non-tribal population had a decisive influence. In the plains, the Ahom League lost every seat it held, because the Ahoms are everywhere outnumbered, and they have been pressing for separate representation for some time. The other plains tribes have only 4 special seats.

4. But in Section C, the principle of separate representation might be carried much further, for the Muslims are strongly for it. If the tribal peoples as a whole got separate representation and the Scheduled Castes were free to elect their own representatives, the situation would be greatly altered. It is possible that then Bardoloi's forecast might prove justified, and indeed the whole hold of the Caste Hindus would be precarious, if not at an end. If this reading of the objectors' fears is correct (and it is shared by some others who are well-informed) it goes far to explain Gandhi's attitude. The possible separation of the Scheduled Castes alone would make him intransigent. If the Muslim League enters the Constituent Assembly, I would hazard a guess that the question of separate representation will be one of the main battlegrounds.



10. Deliberation on AICC Resolution

J.P. Narayan's Speech at AICC Meeting
National Herald, 7 January 1947.

This resolution represents one more step forward on the slippery path of compromise, the end of which will be ultimate acceptance of even Pakistan, just as a leader of Rajaji's eminence proposed we could do some years ago. I feel distressed sometimes by the way the AICC invariably sets its seal of approval on every decision of the Working Committee and I feel it may be a good thing if I resigned from the AICC also. If ever there was a time to disagree with the Working Committee it is now.

My speech may sound like a threat, but that is not my intention. I realize that our party is a small minority in the AICC and the majority can afford to disregard its views altogether. We have accepted your decisions till now, but the time may come when we shall have to part company.

There are only two ways open to us. We can carry on with the Constituent Assembly and do only such things as are approved by the League, the British and the princes. That can be one course. It will be a course dear to the heart of men like Dr M.R. Jayakar and Pandit H.N. Kunzru. If we take that road then we can regard every issue as a side issue. The second course is to act in the Assembly as if it is a sovereign body and frame a real revolutionary constitution and then ask for complete transfer of power to those elected under that constitution. It may be that the Constituent Assembly will not be allowed to take this course which is the only honourable one.

The Congress was strong enough to come to grips with the British Government, but the Congress instead of using its strength entered into compromises which only enlarged India's internal trouble. We agreed to the Congress joining the Constituent Assembly and Pandit Nehru's resolution moved on it gave a new hope, but that hope has disappeared after the way the League and Lord Wavell have conspired together. I do not know how anyone can hope for any advance towards freedom as a result of the Constituent Assembly's work. It was a great mistake to have allowed the League to join the Interim Government without insisting on assurance of cooperation by it.

We are told that the British are quitting India. I saw no sign of it in my recent tour in the Punjab and in Kashmir. I see no sign of it in the way the League has been brought into the Interim Government. The Congress is supposed to be helping the British to pack their bedding, but it looks as if the British during their 200 years in India have collected so much that the bedding takes years to pack (Laughter).

11. 'AICC Accepts 6 December Statement; Kripalani's Appeal for Co-operation'

National Herald, 7 January 1947.

NEW DELHI, 6 Jan.—The AICC today passed the Working Committee's resolution advising acceptance of HMG's 6 December statement by 99 votes to 52. The main amendment for rejection of the statement, which was moved by Mr Purushottamdas Tandon, was lost, 54 voting for the amendment and 102 against.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the mover of the Working Committee resolution accepted Mr Abdus Samad Khan's amendment for the addition of Baluchistan to the phrase 'N-WFP

and the Sikhs in the Punjab' mentioned in paragraph 3 of the resolution. All other amendments were either withdrawn or negatived.

In his presidential remarks, Acharya Kripalani congratulated the house for accepting the resolution prepared for it by the Working Committee. He pleaded for cooperation between the A-ICC and the Working Committee. The session concluded at 12.45 p.m.

Britain May Give More Trouble

Acharya Kripalani said that as this was an emergency meeting of the AICC none of the official resolutions of which some members had given notice could be taken up.

Dr Choitram Gidwani had asked, Acharya Kripalani said that the Working Committee should give an assurance that no more interpretations would be forthcoming from the British Government or would be acceptable to the Congress. 'So far as the British Government is concerned, I may tell you this is not the end of trouble. Throughout the career of the Constituent Assembly there will be trouble. And the British Government will always put spokes in the wheel of progress. Imperialisms die hard. Home policies may change but imperial policies do not change, whatever the form of Government. As I said in my presidential address at Meerut, one would have thought that democracy and empire were poles apart but we have imperial democracies. Today, though Britain has a socialist Government, it has a socialist imperialism too. And so is France which is seeking to repress the urge to freedom of our neighbour in Indo-China. There is no "ism" whether it be socialism or communism, that is immune from the danger of imperialism.'

Not Stationary Body

'Therefore, so far as the British Government are concerned, you must be prepared for hindrances in your way and these hindrances will have to be overcome. So far as the allies of British imperialism are concerned, chiefly the Muslim League, you must also understand that troubles will arise at every stage. I am not quite sure that the "very modest and moderate resolution." According to our radical friends, that we have passed today will bring in the League. It may not come. But what the Working Committee has done is the right thing under the circumstances as conceived by it.

'So far as assurances from the Working Committee are concerned. I am afraid such assurances cannot be given because the Working Committee are concerned. I am afraid such assurances cannot be given because the Working Committee is not a stationary body. It is periodically changing not only its personnel but individuals are also periodically changing in their outlook on national and international affairs.

'Some of us learn by years and experience and some of us do not. Sometimes with growing years our intelligence and our spirit and enthusiasm degenerate. So there is neither any guarantee from the British Government nor from the Muslim League nor even from the Working Committee. I would therefore request you, who are the chosen of the people, to be on your guard. As Jawaharlalji said, there should be some co-operation and co-ordination between the Working Committee and the AICC: Otherwise the business of the house cannot proceed smoothly. If we are unworthy of your trust, it is up to you to cashier us and find out a new working committee for yourself. There is nothing wrong in that. We are your nominees and servants and the nation's servants. You can always call us to account and I hope that we shall always be ready to justify ourselves.

‘The only guarantee for the nation against trouble from the British Government and opposition from the Muslim League and betrayal by its leadership is that you ask the nation and help the nation to keep the powder dry. As Jawaharlalji again said, we have to perfect our organization and make it the vehicle of our will to freedom, our sacrifices for the country, our unity and discipline then I say there are many dangers. Then I say that you will be betrayed by quarters which you do not even imagine today. I say further that even if by the accident of international situation or other world forces you get your freedom, that freedom will not be worth a day’s purchase.’

The Congress President went on: ‘I had thought that Shri Jayaprakashji, realizing the critical condition in which we are would talk in terms of greater unity and of putting our shoulders to the wheel together. Instead of that, he has told us that he will get away from the caste system that he and his party have helped to build in the Congress. It was bad enough that there should be this political caste system. It stands in our way. One can be radical without forming a party. But I think it will be worse if one tries to get out from this caste system of parties that has been built up. I repeat what I said once before: our differences are few.’

Constructive Activity

‘The common points that we have are many—whether we are socialist or plain Congressmen, I would not say non-socialists because plain Congressmen, I am sure, are also socialist but there are brands and brands of socialism and one brand has appropriated to itself the name of socialism in the Congress. The differences between ordinary Congressmen and socialists are very few and our common points are more than 99 per cent. Therefore, why should we spin our political yarn so fine that it may break? Look to the agreements that exist among us and ignore the disagreements. Let us look to the common task that we have to perform and not to differing ideologies. When people work, ideologies fall into the back ground because the difficulties of the work surround them and they have to solve problems from day to day.’

The perfection of the Congress organization could come only through constructive activity. It was not necessary that constructive activity should be confined merely to the items that had been accepted by the Congress. ‘You can devise for yourselves and for the Congress a new set of items but some work you have got to do.’

Acharya Kripalani referred to a report that violence was used recently during some elections in Allahabad and gave a warning that he would not hesitate to take disciplinary action if he found in any province that the rules of the democratic game were violated by violence, impersonation or by any other methods.—API

12. ‘India: Congress League Deadlock Broken’

Daily Worker, 7 January 1947.

BY 99 votes to 52 the All-India Congress Committee yesterday approved acceptance of the British Government’s statement on grouping of provinces.

This breaks the deadlock which had existed between Congress and the Moslem League and makes possible some sort of agreement between the two in discussing India’s constitution with Britain.

Britain’s statement of 6 December interprets the provincial grouping clauses in Britain’s plan for India as meaning that provinces must group into three sections for constitution making purposes, and can opt out afterward if they wish.

The Moslem League accepted this, but the Congress interpretation was that provinces should be free to opt out first. Since Congress holds the majority in the Legislative Assembly, the League withdrew its members in protest.

The new resolution shows the strength of Congress support for Pandit Nehru, Vice-President of the Interim Government.

An amendment demanding rejection of the British statement was defeated by 102 to 54.

Army for Freedom

Sardar Baldev Singh, Sikh Defence Member in the Indian Interim Government appealing to young men to join the armed forces at a meeting yesterday, said that these forces would not be used to suppress India's freedom. If necessary, they might be employed to achieve it.

The armed forces of India were now 'truly national,' he added.

13. League's Entry into a Coalition Impossible in Sind

Extract from a Letter from Francis Mudie to Wavell, 8 January 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, p. 489.

D.O. No. 15/FR.

GOVERNORS' CAMP, SIND

... 4. I put out one or two feelers about a Coalition Government but at the moment that is clearly out of the question. Before the dissolution when the League were weak and the Congress strong, the League was willing to form such a Government, but the Congress always refused. Now the position is reversed and if the League had offered a coalition the Congress would almost certainly have accepted, unless the High Command had objected. The League's present attitude is due partly, I think, to the fact that they think that they can get along without the Congress and partly to the great increase in bitterness brought about by events in Bihar and the UP. Now they say that they will not agree to a coalition in Sind unless Coalition Governments are formed in the Congress Provinces as well. This was also Jinnah's line when I saw him.

5. I am afraid that the All India Congress Committee's resolution has done little good. Even Khuhro and Ghulam Hussain, who have all along been hopeful that the League would enter the Constituent Assembly, seem now to consider that impossible. For one thing, the resolution is so oblique that they fear a trap and for another, the tone of the speeches, which were anything but friendly. I do not know anything definite about Jinnah's attitude, but one or two people who had seen him think it unlikely that he will accept. I have just got Your Excellency's telegram about the meeting of the League's Working Committee. I will do what I can, but am not very hopeful. I may have some influence with these people as far as Sind affairs are concerned, but this is an all-India matter....

14. League Entry into the Constituent Assembly and the Notion of Pakistan

Letter from J.F. Burrows to Wavell, 8 January 1947

Public Record Office (hereafter PRO), CAB 134/344, Acc. No. 4042, NAI.

Khwaja Nazimuddin asked to see me to discuss the constitutional position in the light of the latest AICC decision and as I make a practice of seeing him on such subjects because I believe

he wields a certain influence over Jinnah, generally on the side of moderation and good sense, I had a long talk with him last night.

He began by saying that Jinnah had come back to India very pleased at the results of the London conversations but that he still entertained great doubts about the intentions of Congress, doubts which had not been resolved by recent statements of Nehru and Bardoloi. (I gather that Nazimuddin has not yet had Jinnah's reactions to the AICC decision to accept HMG's pronouncement of the 6th December.)

Giving me his own views he made the following points. He started from the position that if after the Muslim League entered the Constituent Assembly the Secretary of State's Services were wound up and if the Constituent Assembly were to carry on its deliberations for 18 months or two years without framing an agreed constitution, the Muslim League would by then be in a position in which they could carry on successfully neither an active nor a passive movement. He asked why HMG had decided or were proposing to wind up the Secretary of State's Services before a constitution for India had been framed and accepted, thereby 'removing the protection of an impartial authority'. He went on to emphasize the services the Muslims had rendered to the British during the 1942 upheaval (to my suggestion that their attitude had been at best one of benevolent neutrality he pointed to the part Muslim-controlled Ministries in Bengal and the Punjab had played in suppressing the movement) and expressed grave doubts about the desirability of entering the Constituent Assembly especially in view of the fact that the Rules Committee of that body had (he said) already decided that the chairmen of Sections should be appointed by the Constituent Assembly itself. He pointed out that the effect of such a rule might be that the Muslims might in certain circumstances be deprived of all protection from the Chair even where they were in a majority. (This reading of the rules seems to be a misconception. I had not seen the rules when I met Nazimuddin but my attention has since been drawn to rule 10 which does not seem to bear the interpretation I understood him to place on it. He has since admitted to me that it is so).

In reply I said that the Muslim League were now at the cross roads. I recalled that I had already given him some advice about joining the Interim Government (vide my letter to you of the 15th July acknowledged in your D.O. No. 592/58 of the 19th July 1946) and that advice had subsequently proved well founded. I did not want them to make the same mistake as regards entering the Constituent Assembly as they had made with regard to the Interim Government. I went on to say that in my opinion Pakistan was an untenable proposition. From this stage the conversation became exceedingly frank assuming that it was an untenable proposition to have one Pakistan—it would have to be two or three Pakistans—I asked him how he viewed the acceptance of the limited objective provided for in the Cabinet Plan. I reminded him that the League had previously had the opportunity under the Cripps Plan of having a greater and a fuller Pakistan than was offered under the present plan as under the Cripps Plan the Muslim Provinces could have opted out of the proposed Union of India and then remained either within or without the British Commonwealth of Nations, whereas under the present plan their connection with the British Commonwealth of Nations would follow the decision of the proposed Union of India. They had not acquiesced in the Cripps Plan when it was before them and their position had since steadily worsened. If they now rejected the Constituent Assembly, I felt confident that, in view of the fact that the Congress had accepted (even with some woolly phraseology) the Cabinet Plan as explained in HMG's most recent statement and this acceptance had been flashed round the world, if the Muslim League, after that, did not now enter the Constituent Assembly, world opinion would feel, and the actual position would

be, that the Muslim League would have to make the next move. They could not stand still. They would have to be prepared to embark upon either an active or a passive movement. If active, it meant civil war and they were in no position to wage a civil war. At most they could engineer sporadic outbursts of communal rioting but communal outbreaks would lead them nowhere. A successful war to achieve Pakistan was not within the power of the Muslims. A passive movement would inevitably lead to an active movement for I did not believe any such movement could long remain passive. I therefore urged him not to be so woolly minded as the League had shown themselves at Bombay—there were no more titles to renounce—but to agree to join the Constituent Assembly in the light of the declarations of the Cabinet Delegation on the 16th May and of His Majesty's Government on the 6th December.

Nazimuddin seemed rather shaken and only advanced by way of reply the question what in my opinion would be the reaction of HMG if the Muslim League subsequently announced that they desired to have Pakistan within the British Commonwealth of Nations. I replied that the Pakistan envisaged by the Muslim League was not a practical possibility in any case and that, though such a declaration might embarrass HMG in my opinion HMG would find great difficulty in accepting that declaration in place of the Cabinet Mission's Plan for a Constituent Assembly.

I impressed upon Nazimuddin the advisability of the Muslim League's entering the Constituent Assembly before the 20th January. To this he made the significant reply that it was not possible for them to enter by the 20th January: they could not enter before April.

I am convinced that Nazimuddin will use his influence on the side of reason as regards entry into the Constituent Assembly.

15. Patel's Discussion with Bengal Members of Congress Committee on AICC Resolution

Extract from Secret Information, 9 January 1947

India Office Records (hereafter IOR), R/3/1/128, Acc. No. 3447, NAI.

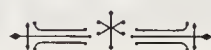
The majority (of the AICC representatives from Bengal joining the AICC meeting at Delhi on the 5th and 6th January) reached Delhi on the afternoon of the 4th and on the evening of the same date three Bengal members saw SARDAR VALLABH BHAI PATEL. He was running a temperature at the time and did not attend the AICC meeting on the 5th and 6th. Mr PATEL most anxiously asked the three Bengal members what the attitude of all Bengal members would be towards the official resolution, the substance of which he described to them. The Bengal members wanted to know if the acceptance of HMG's statement of 6 December would encroach upon the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly. Mr Patel said that the Constituent Assembly was not a sovereign body as it had many limitations and it must work through the limited scope of the Cabinet delegation's statement of 16 May. It is only to give the people of India some confidence in themselves that the Congress is giving out that it is a sovereign body. When the Congress accepted the 16 May formula of the Cabinet delegation in its entirety it was implicit in that acceptance that they would accept everything in the shape of 6 December statement of the British Prime Minister. The Constituent Assembly cannot function when one of its effective limbs is not there. It is therefore incumbent that the Muslim League members must be brought in and with their help a Constitution should be framed. Refusal to accept the 6 December Statement would lead to a state of war with the British Govt. and the Congress

is not ready for that. Any fight with the British Govt. must nowadays lead to a fight with the Muslims and this must be avoided at any cost.

One of the three Bengal members asked if this climb-down on the part of the Congress would make the Muslim League join the Constituent Assembly, if the Congress would not lose its prestige with the people of India and abroad and why should Assam be let down unceremoniously when Pandit Nehru gave that Province high hopes. Mr Patel said that this was definitely a climb-down on the part of the Congress; but for the good of the people of India principles have sometimes to be swallowed for the sake of expediency. In a political game compromises have to be made, and in India the Congress prestige will not suffer more than it has already suffered by entering the Interim Government. Entering the Interim Govt is not the goal of the Congress but it is a stage in the achievement of independence. If it is found that the assumption of office is standing in the way of the realization of its goal, the Congress will walk out of office and begin starting a fight. Surely the whole of India cannot be plunged into a civil war *[sic]* for the sake of Assam. The Congress viewpoint is that it has got a loop hole in the stone wall of British sovereignty in India. This loop hole is the Cabinet delegation's statement of 16 May. By taking advantage of it, it now wants to get rid of the British, their influence and administration. When the British had gone and ceased to play any part in the political game of this country, it will not be difficult for the Congress to come to really friendly terms with the Muslim League, leaders will find none other to support them.

One of the Bengali members asked why Mr Gandhi then advised Assam to keep aloof from grouping. Mr Patel did not give any reply to this but said that the official Congress resolution to be moved on the 5th at the AICC meeting was discussed by Pandit Nehru with Gandhi in Noakhali, drafted by Pandit Nehru and was finally approved by Gandhi.

II. The Bengali delegates then saw Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who enquired who were opposing the resolution. He was told that the F.B. and the 'Socialists' would oppose it. Pandit Nehru flared up at the word 'Socialist' and said 'Am I not Socialist?' He said that it was he who had created the Congress Socialist Party, it was he who made Jai Prakash Narain find his feet in politics and it was he who had taken him in the Congress Working Committee. Now Jai Prakash Narain resigned from the Working Committee and perhaps he has done well. Pandit Nehru was told that Sarat Bose might also reply but Pandit Nehru made no comments. Pandit Nehru was told that Bengal Congress men would vote for the resolution but it baffled Bengal Congressmen's understanding when they found that it was Pandit Nehru who was letting down Assam when previously he had given high hopes to the leaders of that province. Pandit Nehru gave a curt reply saying that Assam could not hold up the progress of the rest of India and support to Assam would mean refusal to accept the British Prime Minister's statement of 6 December, and letting loose forces of chaos and civil war. He was asked why then the resolution gave a direction saying that a province or a part of a province might not be compelled to join a group. Pandit Nehru replied that this was a pious wish and did not mutilate the 16 May statement.



16. A Reluctant Muslim League Might Enter the Constituent Assembly

Extracts from a Letter from Pethick-Lawrence to Wavell, 9 January 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 494–5.

PRIVATE AND SECRET

... 2. The All-India Congress Committee's Resolution goes, I suppose, as far as could be expected to meet the Muslims, and I am glad to read that Jinnah is calling his Working Committee together to consider it. Both sides have in my opinion genuine cause to distrust the other and both have left-wings in order to placate whom they have to use words which inflame inter-communal tension and make agreement more difficult.

3. It looks to me as if we should rightly judge this Resolution as marking a genuine step by the Right-Wing elements of Congress to meet the Muslim point of view. I have no doubt that this is in large measure due to the moderating effect of responsibility and to our announcement of 6th December and our conversations with Nehru in London, and your estimate that the Congress would accept a firm declaration by us of our intention has certainly been justified. I fear, however, that we may be faced with considerable delay by Jinnah followed at best by a grudging entry of the Muslim League into the Constituent Assembly. Even when we get to that point the Constituent Assembly may only become an arena of communal warfare without any common constructive intention. If that happens it will be very difficult for the Right-Wing elements in Congress to maintain working relations with the Muslims against Left-Wing pressure, and they may be forced against their own judgment into courses which will result in a communal flare up....

17. Persisting Doubts over Muslim League Entry into Constituent Assembly

Extract from a Letter from Wavell to A. Nye, 10 January 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 496–7.

... Many thanks for your letter of 2nd January. The AICC did not accept HMG's statement of 6th December without a great deal of talk. The left wing very strongly opposed it, and I understand that Nehru's resolution, which had been drafted by the Working Committee, was only passed in the end by the Working Committee treating it practically as a vote of confidence in themselves. It is interesting that your Premier should have told you that Gandhi had helped to induce the Congress High Command to accept the statement of 6th December, for my information is that he was against acceptance, and that the Working Committee had the courage to act against his advice.

I hope that Jinnah will let the Muslim League come into the Constituent Assembly. Liaquat Ali Khan whom I saw on Tuesday thinks that the AICC's resolution is so qualified an acceptance as not to be an acceptance at all, and seemed doubtful whether the Muslim League could regard it as sufficient assurance on which to enter the Constituent Assembly. Suhrawardy, whom I also saw on Tuesday, feels that the Muslim League should now join the Constituent Assembly and says he will use his influence to this end.



18. Sikhs Demand Support for Communal Veto regarding Constitution Making

Resolution Passed by the Working Committee of the Pratinidhi Panthic Board, 11 January 1947

AICC Papers, File No. G-17 (KW-I)/1946, NMML.

The Working Committee of the Pratinidhi Panthic Board has given due and careful consideration to the resolution of the AICC dated 5.1.47 on the statement of His Majesty's Government dated 6th December, 1946. It notes with deep pain and anguish that the position of the Sikhs has been seriously worsened by the aforesaid resolution. The Committee warns the Panth of the dangers that are looming ahead and has also decided to call an extraordinary meeting of the General Committee on 26th January, 1947, 11 a.m. in S. Teja Singh Hall, Amritsar to consider the extremely critical situation created. It also calls upon the Congress to implement the assurances held out to the Sikhs by supporting the Sikh demand for communal veto regarding constitution making.

19. 'No Real Acceptance of 6 Dec Statement by Congress: Suhrawardy Criticizes HMG's Attitude'

Dawn, 11 January 1947.

PREMIER H.S. Suhrawardy of Bengal declared in New Delhi on Friday that His Majesty's Government should inform the Congress that the 6 January Resolution adopted by the All-India Congress Committee 'pretends' to accept the British Government's 6 December Statement 'but does not in fact do so.'

'It should not be left by HMG to the Muslim League to pick holes in the resolution of the Congress,' the Bengal premier said in an interview.

'It seems to me that HMG and others here like the Viceroy, have taken the attitude that the Congress has accepted and "you had better go in"', to the Constituent Assembly, he added, Mr Suhrawardy has met with the Viceroy during his stay in Delhi.

Mr Suhrawardy declined to express an opinion about whether the League would accept the Congress resolution, commenting that 'it is solely a question of whether Qaed-e-Azam Jinnah is prepared to take the risk of dissident provinces misbehaving.'

Although saying that the resolution of 6 January 'does not betray any animus against the League,' Mr Suhrawardy said that if the speeches urging adoption of the resolution reflected 'the real mind of the Congress, and not blowing of hot air, it is not hopeful' that the League will regard it as sufficient to warrant participation in the Constituent Assembly due to reconvene on 20 January.

The speeches at the AICC session of 5-6 January indicated that 'the Congress considers the League its enemy and an agent of British Imperialism,' the Premier continued, 'and if that is what the Congress really believes, there is really no hope.'

Whether the League is in the Constituent Assembly or out of it, Mr Suhrawardy said, 'The whole thing depends on how the Congress proposes to utilize its majority.'

'Suppose the Congress is unfriendly and proposes to use its majority to ride roughshod over all demands of the Muslim League. Then, I think, it is a far better proposition that the Muslim League should remain outside the Constituent Assembly and let the Congress have their own way. It won't create any internal situation.'

‘If the League enters the Constituent Assembly and there it were constantly defeated by the Congress and it were made patent that the Congress proposed to utilize its majority to suppress or defeat all League resolution; then in that case a serious internal situation might not be avoided and there would be a tussle which would have repercussions outside.’ He did not enlarge what the outside repercussions would be.—APA.

20. “Assam Will Decide for Herself What to Do”—Gopinath Bordoloi’

Report in *Axomiya* (Weekly) (All *Axomiya* extracts translated from Assamese by Lakhimi Datta), 11 January 1947.

Assam now will function alone in accordance with the advice of AICC. AICC now has given freedom to the provinces/states to work on their own. So, if Assam is forcibly included in Bengal, then Assam will have to decide for herself her future course of action. We are ready to sit in the ‘Sakha Parishad’, but what Muslim League has demanded from the union centre, Assam has also demanded the same. If Muslim League has feared that increase in members in the Central Union is a threat to the minority; then Assam has greater fear from its inclusion in Bengal.

21. Tayabullah on the Grouping Option for Assam

Report in *Axomiya* (Weekly), 11 January 1947.

Md Tayabullah, President, Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, after meeting Congress Working Committee and All India Congress Committee representatives in Delhi. He criticized the joint British–League conspiracy of the ‘Grouping Plan’ to weaken the Indian National Congress by it. He opined, ‘Congress is determined to have an independent India and take part in a suitable administrative system. It will achieve it despite several obstacles. If Congress directly rejected the 6th December plan, then it would have benefited Jinnah and the British would have appreciated it. But now Indian National Congress has opened the door of the government to the Muslim League and if the latter does not join it, then Indian National Congress would accordingly do its job alone’.

Tayabullah also said that Assam never accepts an administrative machinery designed by others. No one can forcibly include Assam with other provinces. At any cost, Assam will not sacrifice its demands of provincial autonomy and self-government and self-determination.

22. ‘Delhi AICC Session Reviewed: Another Step Down the Road to Surrender’

Extracts from a Report from *People’s Age*, 12 January 1947.

The All-India Congress Committee has passed the Working Committee’s resolution accepting the 6 December Statement of the British Government.

In the first open skirmish between the Congress and imperialism since the acceptance of Cabinet Mission’s Plan, the Congress leadership retreated and bowed down to the imperialist will. For the 6 December Statement was a clear challenge to everything that the Congress leadership had said about the Constituent Assembly and the Cabinet Mission’s Plan.

The Statement bluntly denied the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly making it quite clear that the final word lay with His Majesty's Government.

Further by stating that a constitution framed by a Constituent Assembly in which a large section of the Indian population is not represented will not be enforced. It encouraged the obstructionist tactics of the League leaders and commanded the Congress to bring the League into the Assembly.

Thirdly, the Statement definitely stated, what was perhaps already contained in the 16 May declaration—that the sections will frame constitution for the Province, that decisions will be taken by a simple majority vote of representatives and not by Province, and that the grouping procedure was compulsory.

It once again gave the League leadership the whiphand, enabling it to use the section as a pressure against the All-India Constituent Assembly and pursue the game of partition to the farthest limit.

The London Statement had thus removed all equivocation and cleared the ring for a showdown between the Congress and the League while retaining the initiative in the hands of imperialism.

Retreat before Attack

The All-India Congress Committee, under the leadership of the Working Committee, has not only not accepted the challenge, but decided to beat a retreat before this imperialist insolence. The resolution put before the AICC is much milder than the 22 December statement of the Working Committee and accepts the London Award.

On the question of sovereignty it only makes mild protest saying:

‘The AICC is firmly of opinion that the constitution of a free and independent India should be framed by the people of India on the basis of as wide an agreement as possible. **There must be no external interference whatever by an external authority...**’

Barring this bald statement, it says nothing against British insolence.

On the question of groupings, the resolution accepts the London Award and agrees to ‘advise action in accordance with the interpretation of the British Government in regard to the procedure to be followed in the sections.’

Thus it will advise the North West Frontier Province, Assam, and others, to join the respective sections.

In these sections, the League representatives who are committed to Pakistan irrespective of the wishes of the people have the majority. They will do their utmost to compel the Union of Assam with Bengal or the grouping together of Sind, the Punjab, the NWF Province and Baluchistan.

How does the AICC resolution propose to protect the freedom and self determination of these Provinces and guard them against the menace of compulsory grouping held in the London Award and the Cabinet Mission's Plan?

Rights of Provinces

Not by appealing to the people of the Province concerned not to compel each other; nor by demanding a plebiscite of the adult population; but by indirect begging for these Provinces and people the same concession or veto that has been promised to the League under the 6 December Statement:

‘The Congress cannot be a party to any compulsion or imposition against the will of the people concerned, **a principle which the British Government have themselves recognized.**’

This refers to the guarantee given to the League that no constitution will be enforced on unwilling parts and is a plea that similar guarantee should be extended to the Provinces minorities in sections.

‘In the event of any attempt at such compulsion, a Province or part of a Province has the right to take such action as may be deemed necessary in order to give effect to the wishes of the people concerned.’

Faith in Manoeuvring

...This veiled demand for veto in section instead of fighting the sections outright—will unleash full blast Congress–League conflict and war at every step in the all-India as well as sectional Constituent Assemblies, leaving the initiative in the hands of imperialism.

From where comes this utter blindness? From a pathetic faith in the Constituent Assembly, in the imperialist plan, from the exigencies of a policy which seeks to avoid battle with imperialism at all costs.

The Working Committee leaders no longer parade the Constituent Assembly as a sovereign body; they are no longer able to do it in face of the London Award and the proceedings of the first session of the Assembly. But they still want to parade it as a big instrument of liberation; as a big lever for winning freedom and what not....

A Bankrupt Outlook

Much worse and far more dangerous than his illusion was the bankrupt outlook of the leadership towards the Muslim League. Barring Sjt Shankar Rao Deo, every leader, Right and Left, conveniently forgot that the League does not consist only of Mr Jinnah or his lieutenants, but includes lakhs of down-trodden Muslims who are as anti-imperialist as anybody else.

Ignoring this basic fact, Acharya Kripalani described the League as an ally of British imperialism. Pandit Nehru indirectly referred to the League as an enemy of the Congress.

The national leadership refuses to learn by experience. It has not yet learnt anything by its latest discomfiture at the hands of imperialism. Otherwise it would have been clear to it that imperialism was exploiting a fatal weakness in the national armour—the alienation of millions of Muslims from the national struggle and the Congress. Identifying the League with imperialism is a dishonest way of escaping the question.

23. Assam’s Fear of Muslim League Majority Unfounded: Wavell

Extract from a Letter from Wavell to A. Clow, 13 January 1947

IOR, R/3/1/131, Acc. No. 3449, NAI.

... 2. The fears of Assam that the Muslim League might abuse their majority in Section C and reduce the Caste Hindus to a position of permanent subordination in the province are well known here, and have been one of the main difficulties in the way of the Congress acceptance of HMG’s Statement of 6th December. The answer of course is that no constitution which was strongly opposed by the Hindus of Assam (and presumably therefore also of Bengal) would

in fact work; and also the knowledge that the Congress have a secure majority in the Union Assembly at the Centre and are therefore in a position to redress the balance is bound to make the Muslim League careful in the use of its majority, which is at the best very precarious in Section C. The AICC resolution of acceptance was about as good as could be expected, but the speeches at the session were unfortunately not such as are likely to induce a feeling of friendliness on the part of the Muslims.

24. Differences within the Congress on the Issue of Grouping

Editorial in *Axomiya* (Weekly), 18 January 1947.

Regarding the execution of the Cabinet Mission Plan and the decisions taken by AICC, tremendous opposition was emerging in the province. In fact, within the provincial Congress also, differences occurred. Leaders like Fakr-ud-Din Ali Ahmad, Gopinath Bordoloi, Mahendra Mohan Choudhuri criticized the Congress decision. On the other hand Md Tayabullah did not see any problem in the AICC proposal.

In Nagaon district, District Congress president Haldhar Bhuyan criticized the decision of the AICC to group Assam with Bengal and opined that Assam will resist it till the last minute. He stated that AICC decision did not respect Gandhiji's opinion who advised Assam not to join the Bengal Province.

In Surma Valley also, there was intense opposition to the decision. It was opined that the interests of Surma Valley are identical with that of Assam valley. The people of Sylhet never intend to join Bengal and constitute a single entity.

25. Composite Character of Assam Province

Extract from a Letter from A. Clow to Wavell, 19 January 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, p. 512.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, SHILLONG

... 3. Political interest was concentrated on the proceedings of the AICC, particularly with reference to the provincial position. The provincial representatives there were fairly frank in indicating that their fear was one of separate electorates for the groups that make up our population. Mukerjee, the Supply Minister, is reported to have said:

'There were so many groups in Assam—hill tribes, people from the plains, Ahoms, and so on—and if they all got separate electorates, there would be no hope for the people of Assam to achieve unity in future and opting out of the Group would be out of the question. The unity which existed at present would cease to exist.'

The statement is a tacit admission of Saadulla's claim that a plebiscite in Assam would record a vote in favour of grouping. Bardoloi also in a statement after the AICC decision has affirmed that 'the people of Assam are determined to see that the unity and integrity of Assam are not broken.' But the unity of Assam is an aspiration and not a fact. And there is, in my view, more likelihood of attaining it if the composite character of the province is recognized than if it is ignored.

4. The decision of AICC has put the Assamese Congressmen in a dilemma, and some would like to break away from the orthodox fold. The Assam Provincial Congress Committee has

passed a resolution affirming the 'inalienable right' of a province to frame its own constitution, and adhering to the mandate originally given by the Legislative Assembly. I have no particulars of the discussion, but believe that despite this decision and the present clamour, the Assam representatives may possibly enter the Section. This Congress Committee does not include the Surma Valley Congressmen who come under the Bengal Committee; most of them want to enter the Section, but are not venturing to say much about it for fear of a break-up of the party here. The decision of the Muslim League may affect the Hindu outlook here.

26. 'AICC Must Compel Assam Congress to Accept Grouping to Win League's Cooperation'

Dawn, 20 January 1947.

Calcutta, Saturday—**'The All India Congress must either compel its provincial body in Assam to submit to the decision of the AICC or face the fact that they have not accepted the statement of 6 December'**, said Khwaja Nazimuddin, former Premier of Bengal and a member of the Muslim League Working Committee, in an interview here today.

Khwaja Nazimuddin, who was commenting on yesterday's resolution of the Assam Provincial Congress Committee said that if the Congress had really accepted the statement of 6 December and the Assam Provincial Congress committee was not prepared to submit to that decision, they must disaffiliate the Assam PCC. There could be no two opinions on that point, he declared.

Khwaja Nazimuddin said: 'The deal has been made with the Congress and people of Assam or anybody else do not come in at all. Either the AICC represents the people of Assam or they do not. The Congress as a party is supposed to have accepted the 6 December statement and yet the provincial Congress of Assam is not prepared to recognize the decision of the AICC.

'How can these two things be reconciled and how can the Congress say that they have accepted the 6 December statement in its entirety? Supposing the Muslim League Working Committee and the Council had arrived at a decision, is it possible for a Provincial Muslim League to say that their decision is not binding on them.'

Khwaja Nazimuddin said that he could not anticipate what decision the Muslim League Working Committee and the Council would take but their attitude, he said, would surely depend upon what the Congress was going to do in regard to the decision of the Assam Provincial Congress.

Khwaja Nazimuddin is leaving here by air on 28 January to attend the Muslim League Working Committee.—API

27. Jinnah Questions Congress Acceptance of HMG Statement

Record of Interview between M.A. Jinnah and the Under-Secretary of State for India, 21 January 1947

IOR, R/3/1/130, Acc. No. 3448, NAI.

Our talk was mainly concerned with the Congress Resolution accepting HMG's interpretation with regard to the voting in the Sections. Jinnah maintained that the Resolution did not constitute an acceptance. He stressed the use in the Resolution of the word 'advise'. He approached it as if

it were a legal agreement between two parties. He would not agree when I suggested a resolution should not be examined on such a basis. He also considered the reference in the Resolution about submitting other differences to the Federal Court as evidence of non-acceptance.

He also made the point that reference to 'part of a Province' and to the Sikhs was further evidence of non-acceptance.

He considers that Gandhi's advice to Assam not to go into the Section was evidence of non-acceptance.

Referring to the Constituent Assembly he argued that its proceedings were invalid as one of the parties to the contract, namely, the Muslim League, were absent. He accused HMG of policy of drift and said responsibility would be entirely theirs for what might transpire. They should be firm and end the present farce of the Constituent Assembly.

Although he was very restrained in manner he was very critical of Congress. He considers that it is impossible to co-operate with them.

I formed the definite impression that the passing of the Congress Resolution has not influenced him in the slightest degree, and that consequently he will not advise this Council at its meeting on the 29th to enter the Constituent Assembly on this ground.

As regards the services; at the end of the talk he said that so far as the Muslim Provinces were concerned, they would wish to retain their officials, but that he would agree to a measure of compensation being paid to those who wished to go. He said that such provinces would not in any circumstances join the proposed All-India administrative services.

28. League Entry into Constituent Assembly Imperative for Success

Extract from a Letter from Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 22 January 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 529–30.

PRIVATE AND SECRET

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE,
NEW DELHI

There are still no clear indications of the lead which Jinnah is likely to give the Muslim League Working Committee at its meeting in Karachi next week. There is, I believe, a solid body of opinion which favours entry by the League representatives into the Constituent Assembly, although I entirely agree with your analysis that the Constituent Assembly might thereafter become an arena of communal warfare, which would put the Congress Right-Wing in an increasingly difficult position. In spite of evidence to the contrary (for example, the INA proposals about which I have telegraphed to you) there is no doubt that the Congress High Command are becoming sobered by responsibility, and by having to face awkward and embarrassing situations—such as the recent action which has been taken against the communists. Sooner or later the High Command will have to face up to its own Left-Wing and other revolutionary influences, and each time it makes a tentative move to do so it is forced into a more realistic appreciation of what government of a great country really means.

2. The same kind of difficulties are facing the Congress in the short session of the Constituent Assembly which is now going on. It is not yet certain whether they will pass Nehru's resolution about the Sovereign Republican State, or postpone it further. (I have just heard that they have done so, which is likely to increase the difficulties both of the Muslim League and of the Princes.) Patel is in many ways the most realistic of the Congress leaders, and recognizes the need to get the Muslim League in if the Constituent Assembly is to be a success....

29. Congress Must Take a Clear Stand

Speech by Narendra Dev as Reported in *National Herald*, 26 January 1947

Hari Dev Sharma (Ed.), *Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Dev*, Vol. II, pp. 141–6.

The 26th of January is again with us. The Congress Working Committee has issued a modified draft of the Independence Pledge omitting the 'Quit India' clause. Probably the Working Committee feels that this clause will be out of place just now. Is not the Congress engaged in negotiating transfer of power? How can it talk in terms of Quit India at the present moment? Besides, if, we are to go by the declarations of some of the prominent members of the Working Committee, the British have made up their mind to go. Indeed this is what British officials, civil as well as military, have been saying to Indians for sometime past. This, according to them makes the reference to Quit India out of place. And yet the Working Committee is asking the people to take this old pledge again. Why cannot the Congress make it possible for the country to declare Independence on the 26th of January 1947? There is that resolution on Objectives moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the Constituent Assembly. Why cannot the Congress ask the people to confirm this declaration on the 26th of January and take a pledge to implement it in accordance with the plan of action put forward by the Congress? Why cannot the Congress proceed to enforce it by fixing a limit within which Britain must withdraw completely and ask for the date when the British Army will leave Indian shores?

A Suggestion

This suggestion should not be taken lightly when a responsible British paper like the *New Statesman and Nation* can in all seriousness make such a proposal. I do not see why our leaders should hesitate in making such a demand. Their hesitancy in making such a demand can lead only to one conclusion that they are cocksure that the British are of their own accord contemplating such a step in the near future. But are our leaders so sure that the British are prepared to quit immediately? Or they do not see the necessity of such action or are they afraid to force the pace lest the golden link they are trying to forge should break?

No Quitting Yet

The declarations of our leaders point to the former conclusion and their actions indicate the latter. Politically conscious sections in India or for that matter, abroad, do not believe that British imperialists have suffered a sudden attack of high moral idealism which compels them to get out of India or wind up their widely-flung empire as early as possible. There is no evidence to support such a contemplation while there is plenty of it to support the view that British imperialists are trying to hold on to their empire as best they can. The imperialist mentality is still there, only imperialism has changed its technique under altered circumstances. Here and there they may look like withdrawing. But they are offering to recede only as far as they are forced to and as far as they feel is essential in order to be able to retain control of the next.

Third-Rate Power

That things have become difficult for Britain and its empire is true. This last war has reduced England to the position of a third-rate power. Britain today can neither defend its empire nor refloat itself economically without the help of the United States. Its weight in world politics has considerably been reduced. It has lost its old commercial and financial supremacy. The volume of its export trade is diminishing and it is losing its own markets. Many members of

the British Commonwealth are making rapid strides in the field of industry and are increasing their production. Iran being the world's broker England has become a debtor country. Its foreign investments have largely vanished. Many members of the Commonwealth are no longer interested in the defence of the empire. They are much more interested in regional defence and are for this purpose gravitating towards the USA. These dominions are, therefore, setting up interests which come into conflict with those of the mother country and there is a tendency to weaken the empire from within. The result is that the British Empire is losing its old solidarity and is not as united today as it used to be.

Again, everywhere in the East revolutionary and national consciousness of the people has been heightened and powerful freedom movements are shaking the foundations of British imperialism.

Defence Problem

Britain's defence is becoming a difficult proposition. It is not possible to defend the British Isles from the new weapons of warfare like the atom bomb, the rocket and the aircraft and as England has so far been the beast of the empire all the defences of the empire have so far been concentrated in England itself. For the safety of England and her empire it has now become imperative for her to change her military strategy. The new proposal is to establish military bases in Africa and to disperse industries in the continent of Africa. Moreover, a common defence is being thought of in alliance with the United States.

Two Blocs

Again a new antagonism is developing all the world over. The world is being divided into two blocs—the Anglo-American bloc and the Soviet bloc. The unlimited expansion of the U.S. has made it the world's greatest military power. The prosperous capitalism and the military strength of the U.S. are today the mainstay of British prosperity and political supremacy. It is true that American capitalism has a large base at home and near about for expansion and exploitation and has so far not assumed the form of an aggressive imperialism farther away from its base. It, therefore, does not seriously come into conflict with British imperial interests and a sort of partnership seems practicable. That is not the case with the other great power of the world today, namely, Soviet Russia. So the British Empire and Soviet Russia came into conflict in Europe, Iran and elsewhere. This handicaps British imperialism in its attempts at domination and exploitation of Asia and Africa.

British Labour

Again at home, British capitalism itself is being subjugated more and more by the rising power of the people of Britain. The Labour Party also is not having an easy time. Those who voted Labour are getting more and more disappointed. The younger members of the party are getting restless and becoming more and more ideal [*sic*]. The opposition to some of the policies of the Labour Government is growing. The controversy on foreign policy in which 82 members abstained from voting is symptomatic. It clearly shows that Mr Bevin's foreign policy is being more and more disapproved of and dependence on America is not being relished.

It is not clear to many why the Labour Government which claims to represent the British working class should become a tool of America and entangle itself in the meshes of American imperialism. The alliance of a socialist Government with American imperialism which forebodes to be the greatest danger of the world seems strange to some who also realized that if the

Labour Government remains true to its socialist policies and election pledges it will have to come into conflict with imperialist America. In no case do the workers of England want to become responsible for a war with Russia. They want to remain friendly with America but do not want to involve themselves in its quarrels with Soviet Russia.

Besides the question of foreign policy there are domestic matters on which a difference of opinion is growing between the leadership and the rank and file. The policy of nationalization is not being speeded up and the housing problem is becoming acute. For all these reasons a doubt has been raised in the minds of earnest and serious men whether the Government will push its programme of socialism or will follow a policy of drift and accommodation to vested interests.

New Imperialism

These various factors have forced Britain to drastically revise its policy in the East. It has become impossible for it to govern its colonies and dependencies in the old way. A new kind of imperialism has been forced upon her which gives the impression of withdrawing politically, of trying political appeasement with subject countries in return for economic and military advantages. But there is only as much attempt at political appeasement as is justified by circumstances and the advantages to be got. So there is no desire to get out of Sudan, Palestine, Burma, Ceylon and India completely. On the other hand, consistent and persistent attempts are in progress to manipulate and gerrymander things in such a way as to neutralise, handicap or moderate the rebellious nationalism of the dependent countries and thus salvage as much of the British Empire as possible. The separatist movements are being encouraged in India, the Sudan and elsewhere with a view to weaken nationalism. British rulers do not trust the resurgent, progressive and democratic forces and they are everywhere using reactionary bearers as their tools to block the path of progress. They are most anxious that the new power that may emerge in India should be both friendly and conservative for their minds are so constituted that they cannot trust a genuine democratic party which is not dominated by capitalists and other vested interests.

Part of a Plan

So that what is happening in India today is part of the new imperialist plan of getting things done without show of force as far as possible by appeasing the nationalist parties and trying to draw them into partnership with British imperialism. The Muslim League and the Princes are being used for this purpose and an attempt is being made to weigh things against Indian nationalism in such a way and to such an extent as to overpower it, to neutralise it or at least to underrate its militancy and destroy its striking capacity. It is creating new difficulties in our way just to demoralize us and to produce a situation in which it may be called upon to arbitrate between contending parties.

The way to meet this menace is to prepare for struggle and a final showdown. Even while we negotiate, we must keep our powder dry. Like Aung San 'we may hope for the best but we should prepare for the worst'. The British are not going in the sense in which we want them to go. They are preparing a new strategy on all fronts for effective recovery. In this they have the fullest support of the United States. They will see to it that their vital interests in the new set up are maintained intact. It is becoming more and more obvious that they will have to be driven out if we want to build a united and democratic India. We must prepare for that.

30. 'AICC Decision Negatives 6 Dec. Statement: Statement by Liaquat Ali Khan'

Dawn, 26 January 1947.

'THE AICC of 6 January has completely negated the principle of decision by simple majority vote in Sections by insisting on a vote for province or a part of a province clearly meaning NWFP and Assam.' says Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, General Secretary, All India Muslim League, in a statement from New Delhi on Saturday.

The full text of the statement is as follows:

'There has lately been considerable propaganda from a certain quarter to the effect that the Congress by the resolution of the AICC of 6 January has accepted the British Government's interpretation, contained in their statement of 6 December of those fundamental principles and points of procedure regarding which Congress had put forwards its own interpretations and in accord with the Cabinet Mission's statement of 16 May.

'The Muslim league is ... being accused of intransigence for not having rescinded its decision on July 1946 and for not participating in the Constituent Assembly when it reassembled on 20 January.

In the Constituent Assembly itself, Congress is taking decisions unilaterally on issues of far reaching constitutional importance although at this stage it was authorized by the Statement of 16 May to settle preliminaries.

'Threats have also been uttered on the floor of the Assembly that Congress would proceed with the work of constitution-making although ... Muslims of British India may continue to remain unrepresented on that body.

'The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League is meeting in a few days and will undoubtedly express its considered opinion on the developments which have taken place since the British Government's Statement of 6 December, following the London talks.

'Meanwhile, I would like to point out that the AICC resolution of 6 January has completely negated the principles of decisions by simple majority vote in the Sections by insisting on a veto for "a province or a part of a province" (clearly meaning N-WFP and Assam) in Section B and C, and to the small minority of Sikhs in Section B.

'In the course of his speech at the AICC, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has also categorically denied that Congress had agreed in the past or would agree in the future to a reference to Federal Court of other questions of interpretation, by either side, as they arose from time to time.

'If the Congress still maintains that it has accepted the Cabinet Mission's Plan as again interpreted by the British Government's Statement of 6 December, I would ask it to answer the following questions publicly and in unambiguous terms:

Does the Congress agree that the Sections sitting as a whole and by simple majority vote shall decide whether there are to be Groups and also settle the Group Constitutions.

Does the Congress accept that the Constitutions of the provinces shall be settled by the Sections concerned sitting as a whole and taking decisions by simple majority vote?

Does the Congress agree that Section C will settle the Constitution for the Province of Assam by simple majority vote, that a new legislature for the Province of Assam shall be elected according to the Constitution so settled, and the Assam will exercise its right of remaining in the Group or opting out by a vote of that new Legislature?

Does Congress recognize the right of Section B to settle the Constitution of the North-West Frontier Province by a simple majority vote of the Section as a whole and that a new legislature

for the NWFP shall be elected under the Constitution so settled, this new legislature alone being competent to decide whether the Province is to remain in Group B or opt out?

Does Congress agree that Section B sitting as a whole and by simple majority vote, shall settle the Constitution for the Punjab and the Group Constitution, if there is any, affecting all communities concerned, including the Sikhs, and that such a constitution for the Punjab and for the Group shall be final, subject to the approval of Parliament in terms laid down by the Cabinet Mission in their Statement of 25 May, regarding safeguards for minorities and that the Sikhs as a community shall have no right of veto?

Does the Congress agree that either side shall have the right to refer other questions of interpretation to the Federal Court and that its decisions shall be accepted by both sides?

‘If the Congress has really accepted the British Government’s Statement of December 6 it should have no difficulty in answering these questions in an honest and straightforward manner and without juggling with words.’

31. The Future of Assam

Extract from a Letter from M.K. Gandhi to Mahomed Tayabulla, 26 January 1947
Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (hereafter *CWMG*), Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 392–3.

KAZIRKHIL,
RAMGANJ PS,
NOAKHALI DISTT,

I cannot understand the panic on the part of the Assamese. Panic unhinges man, much more so when it seizes a large number of people. The Resolution passed by the AICC, if it is correctly reported in the papers, gives enough, if not clear, guidance to Assam for it will not compel Assam to act against the declared wish of the people, declared through the Legislative Assembly.

Naturally, Assam has to watch the future developments and act as occasion requires. It would be unwise to take any precipitate action. Whatever action is taken must always be taken so as not to impair the autonomous character of the constitution of Assam. There need be no confusion in anybody’s mind.

32. ‘HMG’s Interpretation Accepted in Full: Maulana Azad Clarifies Congress Stand’

The Hindustan Times, 27 January 1947

Requested to clarify further the Congress position on Grouping in view of doubts entertained in certain circles, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad said, that such doubts were unfounded and unfortunate and that the Congress had accepted HMG’s 6 December statement in full.

Explaining his view Maulana Azad said: ‘The Cabinet Mission’s statement of 16 May laid down that after the preliminary meeting of the Constituent Assembly, it would divide into three Sections. These sections would decide whether there would be Grouping or not. Even if it was decided to form a Group and a constitution framed for it, provinces would have the right to opt out of the Group after the first elections held under the new constitution.

‘The question then arose as to how the Section would arrive at a decision on the point. The Congress held that the representatives of a province within the Section could act as a unit and

decide whether the province should enter into the Group or not. The League and the Cabinet Mission, on the other hand, held that decision within the Section would be by a simple majority of votes and the province would exercise the right of opting out only after the first elections.

Assam's Fear

'This made Assam nervous as Bengal has a majority in section C. Assam fears that Bengal might so frame the constitution of Assam as to make her right of opting out at a later stage a dead letter. Both the Secretary of State for India and Sir Stafford Cripps in their statements to Parliament made it perfectly clear that this right of provinces to opt out must not be tampered with and any attempt to frame a provincial constitution which prejudices such right of the provinces would be against the letter and spirit of the State Paper of 16 May. The Congress had in its resolution of 6 January, accepted the British Government's interpretation of the State Paper expounded in the statement of 6 December and thus agreed that decision in the Section will be by a simple majority.

The Crucial Point

'The manner in which the work in the section is carried out has therefore, now become the most crucial issue. The proceedings in the Sections can be carried out in one of two alternative ways. It is possible that Bengal which has a majority in Section C may use its majority in order to frame the constitution for Assam in a manner which would in fact, though not in theory destroy the right of the majority in the province to opt out at a later stage. The other method of working in the Section would be to refrain from any such interference with the constitution of Assam. In that case, Assam would be able to exercise its right to opting out at the appropriate time if a group constitution was framed by the majority and if Assam so desired.

'Everything now depends on how the representatives of Bengal act in the Section. If the first of the methods, mentioned above, is to be followed, Assam's apprehensions would be fully justified and nobody can blame them if her representatives walk out of the Section. If, however, Bengal's representatives adopt the second method no problems will arise.

'The question does not arise in Section B in the same form or with the same intensity. If, however, the Punjab uses its majority to frame a Group constitution against the wishes of the other provinces, the NWFP and Sind will be able to exercise their right of opting out if they so desire at the appropriate time.

'The above analysis makes it perfectly clear that the Congress has accepted in full the British Government's statement of 6 December, and the League can now have no excuse for remaining away from the Constituent Assembly.

'My own opinion on the question of Grouping is well known. I have always held and made it perfectly clear to the Cabinet Mission that the idea of Grouping is artificial and the Groups will have no real functions to perform. Subjects which can and demand to be dealt with jointly have already been referred to the Union while subjects which remain in the provinces are of a nature that cannot be jointly administered. Every province has its own problems of education, health and rural development and conditions differ so much from province to province that no province is willing to give up its right to decide these questions itself.

Provincial Integrity

'Communal passions may now blind people to the fact, but when Sections start their work, the smaller provinces are bound to insist on the maintenance of their provincial integrity. This

however, is my personal opinion. The Congress has now decided that it is for the Sections to decide this question and if the Sections so desire there is no hindrance to the framing of a Group constitution subject to the province's right of opting out.

'I earnestly hope that the League Working Committee will in their sitting on 29 January consider the present situation in the country calmly and dispassionately and come to the decision that the resolution of the League Council for withdrawing from the Constituent Assembly be rescinded.'

33. 'The New Trap'

Editorial from *The Hindustan Times*, 28 January 1947.

Mr Liaquat Ali Khan has put many questions to be answered by the Congress. They are all in the nature of leading questions suggesting that the Congress has not really accepted the statement of the British Government of 6 December. Without professing to answer these questions directly, Maulana Azad has issued a statement which gives a clear analysis of the Congress position which should satisfy any one who might have legitimate doubts. But Mr Liaquat Ali Khan's object is not to clear existing doubts but to raise new ones. He has resorted to the familiar trick of raising a fresh controversy to replace the old ones which have become meaningless. He knows that controversy is the politician's breath of life and that if he could successfully entangle the Congress leaders in a new dispute, the League would be able to obtain some fresh concession.

It is essential that no one should fall into this trap. Indeed, no one except the Constituent Assembly has got any right to express an authoritative opinion on the Cabinet Mission statement of 16 May or the interpretation of any of its clauses. As the dispute about Groups and Sections had arisen before the Constituent Assembly began its work, there was some justification for the Congress Working Committee and the AICC to take upon themselves the responsibility of settling the controversy, but now the Constituent Assembly is in full swing and has the sole and exclusive jurisdiction over the matters referred to by Mr Liaquat Ali Khan. If the leaders of the Muslim League want authoritative answers to these or any other points concerning the future constitution or the work of the Constitution Assembly; there is nothing to prevent them from taking their places in that Assembly and putting those questions. So long as they are not prepared to do this, they have not established their *bona fides* and are not entitled to any replies. One might even go further and say that the questions themselves are altogether jejune. It is the business of each Section to decide, subject to the rules of the Assembly as a whole as to how it will do its work. As the Muslim League is in a majority in Section B and C, the onus of applying the provisions of the statement in those Sections will be on its shoulders. How the representatives of Assam or of NWFP or the Sikhs will behave will be dependent upon the manner in which the majority in these Sections deals with them. It is not a matter on which the Congress can possibly give any undertaking even if it were inclined to do so. If one wanted to put counter questions, one may ask the League whether it has absolutely and unconditionally abandoned Pakistan in view of the categorical declaration of the Cabinet Mission regarding that issue. One may also ask whether the Muslim League would accept every decision arrived at by a simple majority in Section A or the Union Constituent Assembly except in the few cases for which a double majority has been provided for in that statement? It would be futile to ask such questions of the League or to expect any answers. The country will be satisfied if the League enters the Constituent Assembly and participates in constitution-making in terms

of the Cabinet Mission plan. More cannot be asked of it nor is the League entitled to ask more from the Congress or any other section of the Constituent Assembly. The simple truth seems to be that the Muslim League wants to continue in the Interim Government without participating in the Constituent Assembly. If Mr Liaquat Ali Khan's questions provide any clue, the League wishes to raise a new dispute about acceptance and provide some sort of excuse for the Viceroy and the British government to delay the implementation of their declaration that only those who accept the proposals relating to constitution-making are entitled to be in the Interim Government. It may also be that as Maulana Azad has suggested, influential sections within the League have realized 'that the idea of Grouping is artificial and the Groups will have no real functions to perform.' If it is so, Grouping will become another demand like Pakistan which the League does not hope for or desire seriously to achieve, but is a convenient means to spite and obstruct the Congress. The best way to deal with such tactics is to leave the League alone and refuse to be drawn into these futile controversies. If the Constituent Assembly goes about its work with quiet confidence, the growing pressure of Muslim opinion will force the leaders of the League to give up their present tactics and play their part in the most important constructive work before the country, namely the drafting of a constitution which will secure for India her independence and to all her peoples freedom, social security and full opportunity for material, intellectual and spiritual progress.

34. 'Everything Depends on the Political Situation': Viceroy's Opinion on Constituent Assembly and Its Working

Extracts from a Letter from Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 29 January 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 572-5.

PRIVATE AND SECRET

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE,
 NEW DELHI.

Thank you for your letter of 16th January. The Muslim League in its various manifestations has been one of my main concerns this week. I am not certain yet what the outcome in the Punjab is going to be, but you are being kept informed of the details, and, as always in India, the changes and developments are rapid. Khizar realizes that he has made a miscalculation of the strength of Muslim League feeling, and has withdrawn the bans which the Provincial Government imposed on the Muslim National Guard and the RSS. Khizar was actually in Delhi when the announcement was made, and anticipated no trouble when I saw him the day before the ban was announced. The League leaders in the Punjab now think they have got him on the run and will try to secure the downfall of his Government. We may perhaps be in for serious trouble in the Punjab, to add to our other difficulties.

2. The League's Working Committee begins its session in Karachi today. It is difficult to get any definite indication of what is likely to happen, as most of the local leaders are unwilling to commit themselves in the absence of Jinnah. It is no use speculating about the result, which you will know before you receive this letter. My own feeling is that the League will accept grudgingly and with reservations, but to a sufficient extent to enable their representatives to take part in the work of the Constituent Assembly. But events in the Punjab may have a fatal effect on the decision.

3. You will have been relieved that Amery has called off his visit, although I do not think that there need have been cause for anxiety if he had come. Much has happened since he

demitted office, and although he would have been approached by interests which might seek the support of the Conservative Party, I do not think that he personally would have had an unduly hostile reception, or would have done anything to mar the present relationship between Britain and India....

5. The Constituent Assembly finished its deliberations rather earlier than had been expected, after passing Nehru's resolutions and setting up certain committees. The wording of the resolution is not such as is likely to attract the Princes, who have a committee meeting in Delhi at the moment to consider lines on which they are to deal with the Negotiating Committee next week. The States have included in their sub-committee some very astute Ministers, and I would expect that they will keep the Constituent Assembly members in play until the Muslim League attitude is finally decided. Further than that, however, I do not think that the Princes are going to commit themselves at this time. The Muslim League and its press have made a grievance of the fact that the Constituent Assembly has gone ahead with these sub-committees, but I think that they realize that not much actual work is possible in present circumstances. Certainly, it will be a grave mistake for the sub-committee on tribal areas to attempt to meet the representatives of the North-West Frontier Province tribes before it has been strengthened by the inclusion of Muslim League Members....

7. By and large, only routine matters of administration are now being disposed of: everything depends on a political solution. I impressed on Liaquat yesterday how necessary it was for the Muslim League to join in the work of the Constituent Assembly, and took the line that the reservations in the AICC resolution were only in effect a statement of the obvious. Liaquat Ali and Azad have been issuing statement and counter-statement in the press on this topic without of course getting any further. Personal relations between the Members of the Cabinet seem quite cordial on the surface although there is little sign of official co-operation and I am told that social contacts are now lacking. I was pleasantly surprised at the reasonableness of the discussions in the Cabinet meeting on Monday last and the speed with which we got through our business....

9. The Congress, in spite of their opposition to compensation, have shown signs lately of realizing the value of your Services. Members of the Working Committee have approached both Hutchings and Abell, and no doubt others, to stay on after the transfer of power. It is, however, clear that the offer of the same conditions of service is not quite as good as it sounds. Patel has informed the ICS Central Association that all that will be guaranteed is the time-scale. As you know, all the important selection posts are well above the time-scale; which is only the basic rate of pay and the minimum given to any member of the Service. I have told Abell to clear up this point.

10. I noticed in a report the other day that the Congress Government in Bombay had decided that the only way to deal with the Communists was to resort to detention without trial. They may well be right, but it is a strange *volte face* from their old attitude to such executive measures; and it may come as a shock to you if they should resort to such 'imperialistic' methods.



35. Muslim League Stand at Karachi Session

Resolution Passed by the Working Committee Meeting of AIML, 31 January 1947
Indian Annual Register, 1947, Vol. I, pp 147–51.

League withdraws acceptance of Cabinet Plan

The decision of the All-India Congress Committee (See p. 114) to accept the British Government's interpretation of the Grouping clauses did not make the path smooth for the Constituent Assembly, though that was the one object that actuated the Congress Executive in making a recommendation to which it must have known there would be considerable opposition. The newspapers that reflected the views of the Muslim League however with characteristic immoderation denounced the Congress resolution.

The Working Committee of the All India Muslim League at its meeting held at Karachi on the 31st January 1947, in a three-thousand word resolution on the constitutional question held that the Congress 'as a major contracting party has not accepted the Statement of 16th May 1946, as clarified by the Statement of His Majesty's Government of 6th December, 1946, and feels that no useful purpose will be served by summoning a meeting of the Council of the All-India Muslim League to reconsider its decision whereby it had withdrawn the acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's plan of 16th May, 1946.'

The Working Committee characterizes the AICC resolution as 'no more than a dishonest trick and jugglery of words by which the Congress has again attempted to deceive the British Government, the Muslim League and public opinion.'

It maintains that the Constituent Assembly, in which only the Congress Party is represented, has taken decisions on principles and procedure exceeding the limitations imposed by the statement of 19 May on Assembly's functions and powers at the preliminary stage which impinge upon the powers and functions of the sections. By these acts the Congress has already converted that 'truncated Assembly into a rump and something totally different from what the Cabinet Mission had provided for.'

The Working Committee calls upon His Majesty's Government to declare that the constitutional plan formulated by the Cabinet Mission has failed because the Congress have not accepted the Statement of 16 May, nor have the Sikhs nor the Scheduled Castes. The Working Committee is of the opinion that the elections to and the summoning of the Constituent Assembly were *abinitio* void, invalid and illegal and continuation of the Constituent Assembly and its proceedings and decisions are *ultra vires*, invalid and illegal and it should be forthwith dissolved.

TEXT OF RESOLUTION

The following is the text of the resolution:

The Working Committee of the All India Muslim League have given careful consideration to the Statement issued by His Majesty's Government on 6 December, 1946, the resolution passed thereafter by the Congress Working Committee on 22 December, 1946, and by the AICC on 6 January, 1947, the speeches delivered by responsible leaders of the Congress at the AICC session referred to above, and the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly during its two sessions so far held; and record their views as follows:

By their Statement of 6 December, His Majesty's Government admitted that the interpretation which the Muslim League had always put on Paragraphs 19 (5) and 19 (8) of the

Cabinet Mission's Statement of 16 May was the correct one and accorded with the intention of the Cabinet Mission and His Majesty's Government. By that Statement it was also proved that the Congress, on the other hand, had 'put forward a different view' and therefore had not accepted what his Majesty's Government themselves described as 'this fundamental point' namely, that decision in the sections, including questions relating to the settling of the constitutions of the provinces included in each group, 'should in the absence of agreement to the contrary, be taken by a simple majority vote of the representatives in the Sections.' His Majesty's Government, furthermore, added that 'this Statement as interpreted must therefore be considered an essential part of the scheme of 16 May for enabling the Indian people to formulate a constitution which His Majesty's Government would be prepared to submit to Parliament'. Accordingly, in their Statement of 6 December, they urged the Congress to accept 'this re-affirmation of the intention of the Cabinet or in the alternative to refer the point to the Federal Court at a very early date.'

CONGRESS AND HMG'S STATEMENT OF 6 DECEMBER

In their Statement of 6 December, His Majesty's Government also affirmed that the Congress had agreed that other questions of interpretation of the Statement of 16 May which might arise might be referred by either side to the Federal Court whose decisions should be accepted, and on the assumption that the Congress had agreed to this procedure, His Majesty's Government asked the Muslim League also to agree to it in order to ensure that the procedure both in the Union Constituent Assembly and in the Sections may accord with the Cabinet Mission's Plan.

Thirdly, His Majesty's Government, in the last paragraph of their Statement of 6 December, reiterated the fact that 'there has never been any prospect of success for the Constituent Assembly except upon the basis of the agreed procedure' and they repeated the assurance: 'Should the Constituent Assembly in which a large section of the Indian population had not been represented, His Majesty's Government would not, of course, contemplate—as the Congress have stated they would not contemplate—forcing such a constitution upon any unwilling parts of the country.' The meaning and the application of this assurance were further clarified by Sir Stafford Cripps in his speech in the House of Commons on 12 December, 1946, when he said, 'But the Government also had to envisage the possibility in the clause in the final paragraph of the Statement.' This was perhaps a statement of the obvious—that if the Muslim League could not be persuaded to come into the Constituent Assembly, then parts of the country where they were in a majority could not be held to be bound by the results.

The situation created by the issue of this Statement by His Majesty's Government was that the onus of taking the next step fell on the Congress and they were called upon:

1. To accept honestly and unequivocally the correct interpretation of Paragraphs 19(5) and 19(8) of the Cabinet Mission's Statement of 16 May, which interpretation had been already accepted by the Muslim league, or to refer the point to the Federal Court;
2. To re-affirm that they accepted the procedure for the settling of other questions of interpretation that might arise, so that the decision should accord with the basic and fundamental principles of the Scheme of 16 May, 1946, namely, that either side could refer such questions to the Federal Court whose decisions would be binding on all concerned; and
3. To postpone the session of the Constituent Assembly which had been called for the 9th December, 1946 pending settlement of the dispute over fundamental points of

principle and procedure which had been brought to the fore by the Statement of 6 December and the correct interpretation of which the Congress had not accepted, as was made clear in that statement, there being no prospect of success for the Constituent Assembly without such agreement particularly on the part of the Congress.

The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League regret to note that the Congress have reacted to the situation created by the Statement of 6 December in a manner which shows that they are determined to adhere to their own views and interpretation of fundamental provisions in the Cabinet Mission's Statement of 16 May, which militate against clearly expressed intentions and interpretations of the authors of that Statement as well as of His Majesty's Government as a whole and which destroy the very basis on which the constitutional plan set forth in that Statement had been drawn up.

By their resolution on 22 December, the Congress Working Committee rejected the suggestion that the point in dispute should be referred to the Federal Court if the Congress did not accept 'this re-affirmation of the intention of the Cabinet Mission', and that Committee decided to convene a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee for the purpose of giving a decision on the issues by the Statement of 6 December. The Working Committee of the Congress, however, in their resolution indulged in an attack on the British Government for their renewed interpretation and clarification, which had called the Congress bluff, and on the Muslim League for no other fault except that its stand had been at last vindicated.

AICC RESOLUTION CRITICIZED

The AICC, by its resolution passed on 6 January, purported 'to agree to advise action in accordance with the interpretation of the Government in regard to the procedure to be followed in the Sections', about which there never was any doubt in the minds of any sane and honest person, but it immediately added the following qualifying clauses: 'It must be clearly understood however that this must not involve any compulsion on a Province and that the rights of Sikhs in the Punjab should not be jeopardized. In the event of any attempt at such compulsion, a province or a part of a province has the right to take such action as may be deemed necessary in order to give effect to the wishes of the people concerned. The future course of action will depend upon the developments that take place and the AICC therefore directs the Working Committee to advise upon it, whenever circumstances so require, keeping in view the basic principle of provincial autonomy.'

These qualifying clauses in the considered opinion of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League confer the right of veto within the Section on a 'Province', and what is more abused, on 'a part of a Province' as well as on the Sikhs in the Punjab, and therefore, they completely nullify the advice or the so-called 'acceptance' by the Congress of the 6 December Statement, and this AICC resolution is no more than a dishonest trick and jugglery of words by Muslim League and public opinion in general.

The question at issue was very simple one. What was required was a straight and honest answer and not these evasions, equivocations and camouflage from one of the two major contracting parties to the questions whether the Congress honestly and sincerely agreed to the proposals of 16 May, as clarified by His Majesty's Government on 6 December 1946, and whether they were prepared to honourably abide by them and carry out the letter and spirit of the proposals which were put before the two major parties by the British Government who

were merely acting as mediators, as unfortunately the two major parties had failed to come to any agreement at Simla and Conference at Simla had broken down.

QUESTION OF REFERENCE TO FEDERAL COURT

Of the second point in HMG's Statement of 6 December namely, the procedure whereby either side could refer other questions of interpretation to the Federal Court, the resolution of the AICC makes no mention but the mover of the resolution, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, on being questioned on the second day of the AICC's deliberations as to whether the Congress had agreed to this procedure, categorically answered in the negative and declared: 'Apart from this, in view of the recent development and the Statement of 6 December, which produces a new situation, I am not prepared to admit for an instant that we have agreed to any future procedure about references. Whatever the future brings we shall have to consider it. I should like to make it perfectly clear that we are giving no assurance about any references in regard to any other matters to the Federal Court. We are not going to commit ourselves at the present moment to any reference to the Federal Court or to any other authority. We shall decide—or the Constituent Assembly shall decide—as we think best in the circumstances.'

With regard to the third point, namely that 'if a constitution comes to be framed by a Constituent Assembly in which a large section of the Indian population had not been represented', such constitution would not be forced upon any 'unwilling parts of the country', the AICC resolution in Paragraph 3, completely distorts the meaning and application of this principle and makes this an excuse to instigate a section of the population of Assam, the North-West Frontier Provinces, the Sikhs and even Baluchistan, to revolt against the decision that might be taken by the relevant Sections sitting as a whole and by simple majority vote. In the opinion of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League the subsequent decision of the Assam Provincial Congress not to abide by the procedure laid down for Sections and its reiteration that 'the constitution for Assam shall be framed by her own representatives only' is a direct result of this instigation and is a step taken by Assam Congressmen in collusion with the All-India leaders of the Congress.

PROCEEDINGS OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OBJECTED TO

The Constituent Assembly met on 9 December and subsequent dates and thereafter on 20 January and subsequent dates and has already taken decisions of vital character so far as it is known to the public, and as some of the sittings were held *in camera* it is very difficult to get correct information as to what other resolutions it had passed or what decisions it has already taken. It has passed a resolution known as the Independent Sovereign Republic Resolution laying down the objectives. It is not only a proclamation of India as an Independent Sovereign Republic but it lays down fundamentals of the constitution as was admitted by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the mover of the resolution. It is a very vital resolution. It lays down the essentials of the next constitution: several things which are mentioned there are fundamentals of the constitution. It speaks of a Republic of 'Union', functions and powers vested in the 'Union' or as are inherent or implied in the Union and resulting therefrom, and talks of present boundaries, states and present authorities, the residuary powers, powers being derived from the people, minority rights and fundamental rights. These are undoubtedly fundamentals of the constitution as they are beyond the limit of the powers and the terms of the Cabinet Mission's Scheme of 16 May, and the resolution is therefore illegal, *ultra vires* and not competent to the Constituent Assembly to adopt.

Next it has appointed several committees and has proceeded to elect the Advisory Committee, referred to in Paragraph 20 of the Statement of the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy on the rights of citizens, minorities, tribal and excluded areas. Further, it has appointed a Steering Committee and various other committees and as some of the decisions have been taken *in camera* it is very difficult to say what resolutions it has passed or decisions have been taken. It has also passed the 'Rule of Procedure' and assumed control of Sections by means of these rules for which there is no warrant or justification particularly Rule 63, which runs as follows:

63 (1) The Assembly shall before finally setting the Union constitution give an opportunity to the several Provinces and States through their legislatures to formulate, within such time as it may fix, their views upon the resolutions of the Assembly outlining the main features of the constitutions or if the Assembly so decides, upon the preliminary draft of the constitution. (2) Before the constitution of any Province is finally settled or the decision to set up to a Group constitution for the Section in which the province is included is finally taken, an opportunity shall be given to the Province concerned through its legislature to formulate with such time as may be fixed for the purpose, its views (A) upon the resolution outlining the main features of the constitution or if the majority of the representatives of the Province in the Assembly so desire upon the preliminary draft of such constitution and (B) upon the preliminary decision of the Section concerned as to whether a Group constitution shall be set up for the Provinces included in the Section and, if so, with what Provincial subject the Group should deal.

And lastly, it has appointed a Committee to define the scope of the Union subjects whereas the position was made quite clear immediately after the Statement of May 16 was issued by the Secretary of State of India in his broadcast and by Sir Stafford Cripps at his Press Conference where he read out an explanatory statement. Both of them stated in the clearest possible terms to the time and manner in which the Group constitutions were to be framed by the Sections concerned before the Union constitution was taken up. The Secretary of State said: 'After a preliminary meeting in common, these representatives of the Provinces will divide themselves up into three Sections. These Sections will decide upon Provincial and Group matters. Subsequently they will re-unite to decide upon the constitution of the Union'. Sir Stafford Cripps at his Press Conference said: 'So the three Sections will formulate the Provincial and Group constitutions and when that is done they work together with the States' representatives to make the Union constitution. That is the final phase.' And the Union is strictly confined to three subjects.

It is clear from the above that the Constituent Assembly in which only the Congress Party is represented has taken decisions on principles and procedure some of which exceed the limitation imposed by the Statement of 16 May on the Constituent Assembly's functions and powers at the preliminary stage and which further impinge upon the powers and functions of the Sections. By taking these decisions in the Constituent Assembly and by appointing a packed committee consisting of individuals chosen by the Congress, the Congress has already converted that truncated Assembly into a rump and something totally different from what the Cabinet Mission's Statement had provided for.

HMG ASKED TO ABANDON PLAN

In view of these facts and circumstances the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League are definitely of the opinion that the Congress by rejecting this final appeal of His Majesty's Government to accept the correct interpretation of fundamental procedure of the Cabinet

Mission's Statement of May 16, and by having already by the resolution and decisions taken in two sessions, converted the Constituent Assembly into a body of its own conception, has destroyed all fundamentals of the Statement of 16 May and every possibility of compromise on the basis of the Cabinet Mission's constitutional plan. The Working Committee accordingly calls upon His Majesty's Government to declare that the constitutional plan formulated by the Cabinet Mission as announced on 16 May, has failed because the Congress after all these months of efforts have not accepted the Statement of 16 May, 1946 nor have the Sikhs nor the Scheduled Castes.

The proposal of May 16 could only be given effect to and carried out if the two major parties agreed to accept them. The Congress had not and have not accepted and do not accept them although the Muslim League had accepted by their resolution the Statement of 16 May, 1946 as far back as June 1946. But in view of the fact that the Congress refused to accept the proposals *in toto* and unequivocally, the Muslim League had to withdraw its acceptance on 29 July, 1946.

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY SHOULD BE DISSOLVED

The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League are therefore, emphatically of the opinion that the election to and thereafter the summoning of the Constituent Assembly, in spite of strong protest and most emphatic objections on the part of the Muslim League, was *ab initio* void, invalid and illegal as not only the major parties had not accepted the Statement but even the Sikhs and the Scheduled Castes had also not done so and that the continuation of the Constituent Assembly and its proceedings and decisions are *ultra vires*, invalid and illegal and it should be forthwith dissolved.

In view of these facts and circumstances the Working Committee are clearly of opinion that as the Congress, as a major contracting party has not accepted the Statement of 16 May, as clarified by HMG's Statement of 6 December, no useful purpose will be served by summoning a meeting of the Council of the All-India Muslim League to reconsider its decision of 29 July 1946 and whereby it had withdrawn the acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's Plan of 16 May 1946.

36. 'League's Secret Pact with Reactionaries'

Extracts from a Report from *The Hindustan Times*, 2 February 1947.

New Delhi, Saturday—A feeling more of pity than of anger marks the reaction in the various quarters in the capital to the resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Muslim League. Everyone here is agreed that the Constituent Assembly must go ahead with its task. There can be no turning back at this stage.

There is universal condemnation of the language used in the League resolution describing the AICC resolution as 'nothing more than a dishonest trick and jugglery of words' and calling the Constituent Assembly representing at least 80 per cent of the people of India, 'a rump.'

That the League should have descended so openly to the language of political gangsterism is considered indicative of impotent rage its leaders have worked themselves up to as a result of their policy of intransigence....

What about Britain?

Much of course, depends on how the British Government react to Mr Jinnah's latest move. Had any doubts been felt by London as to the correctness of the Congress position it would not have hesitated to say so by now. But then the Cabinet Delegation profusely complimented Congress leaders for the resolution they passed accepting the State Paper of May 16 and later changed their views to accommodate Mr Jinnah.

Considerable amusement has been caused among prominent members of the Constituent Assembly who are at present in Delhi and among its officials by two statements in the League resolution. It is made to appear that the so-called *in camera* proceeding transacted some important business of which no one is aware. The fact is that the Constituent Assembly held no *in camera* sittings. It merely converted the House into a Committee for detailed consideration of certain business of a technical character in which the general public was not interested but even that business was later confirmed at an open sitting.

The other matter for amusement is the serious manner in which the League has tried to make Rule 63 of the Rules of Procedure look as constituting a breach of the State Paper of 16 May. The said rule merely mentions that an opportunity may be given to several provinces and States to express their views on the proposed constitution. This is like any ordinary legislature making provisions in its rules for electing public opinion. Even if this rule had not been there it would have been possible for the Sections and the Union Assembly to call for expression of opinion by the legislators of the provinces and the States.

The League resolution also betrays secret alliance between reactionary elements by generally lining up with the resolution passed at a recent meeting of the Indian Rulers and their Ministers. It is now clear that the 'advice' which the Nawab of Bhopal mentioned as having been received by him regarding the 'ultra vires' character of certain proceedings of the Constituent Assembly was tendered to him by persons who certainly included Mr Jinnah.

Some interest has been created by a statement in the League's resolution that the British Government was merely acting as mediator between the two major parties. This is intended to help British propaganda that the 'third' party is not possible for the present political situation in the country. Probably Mr Jinnah expects some reciprocal gesture from London or the Viceroy's House for this friendly act.

Fascist Methods

The fascist character of the League is particularly brought out by the Working Committee's refusal to call another meeting of the League's All-India Council. Unlike the Congress the League executive refuses to give a chance to the larger body to pronounce on so vital a matter as the resolution of the AICC.

Political quarters await with interest the reaction of the British Government to the League's flagrant repudiation of the Cabinet Mission scheme, Mr Jinnah's trouble is that he has sold the idea of Pakistan and cannot now confess to his misguided followers that he cannot deliver the goods. But how long can the present basis of the Interim Government last and when would the League members of the Interim Government be asked to quit? This question and the possible repercussions of the League's resolution were the main points this afternoon at a tea party the leader of the Interim Government and the Minister for External Affairs, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru gave at his residence to meet the Diplomats and Consular Representatives in Delhi.

37. HMG Upholds Congress Acceptance of Cabinet Mission's Plan

Telegram from Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 4 February 1947

IOR, R/3/1/130, Acc. No. 3448, NAI.

My immediately preceding telegram. Following is outline of proposed statement. Begins—HMG have considered the resolution of the Working Committee of the Muslim League dated the 31st January.

In this resolution the Working Committee have decided not to modify their previous decision by which they withdrew acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's plan of the 16th May 1946. The Working Committee claim that the Congress party have not accepted the statements made by the Cabinet Mission on the 16th May 1946 and by HMG on the 6th December 1946, that the Constituent Assembly which met on the 9th December is not the body contemplated by the Cabinet Mission, and that therefore the Constituent Assembly should be dissolved.

In the view of HMG the Congress by their statement of 6th January 1947 have accepted the Cabinet Mission's plan. HMG cannot contemplate seeking a new approach to the whole Indian problem, and they consider that the work of the Constituent Assembly should proceed. They sincerely hope however that the Muslim League will reconsider their attitude and agree to take part in the Constituent Assembly on the basis of the Cabinet Mission's plan and of the statement of the 16th May, the 25th May and the 6th December. Ends.

38. Government Raises Eyebrows on Assembly Sub-committee for Tribes

Letter from Hugh Weightman to G.E.B. Abell, 5 February 1947

IOR, R/3/1/131, Acc. No. 3449, NAI.

Dear George,

I promised to make some enquiries about the matter of a Sub-Committee for the Tribal Areas of the North-East Frontier and here is the somewhat astonishing result.

2. First of all it is apparently contemplated that two Sub-Committees should visit Assam, one to deal with the areas which are constitutionally tribal (in actual fact the Konyak area of the Naga Hills only) and the other two deal with the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas. Which Sub-Committee will deal with the people of the Sadiya and Balipara Frontier Tracts, which though de jure Excluded Areas are de facto Tribal Areas, remains to be seen. We thus have the happy prospect of seeing one body of distinguished statesmen trying to get into Konyak country and another body of distinguished gentry meeting the Angamis, Semas and other Nagas at Kohima or Mokokchung or some other place. The second body incidentally will be full of ideas about Gonds, Bhils and such like who have as much in common with the Nagas ethnologically, psychologically, geographically and in any other sense one can think of as an Eskimo has with a Fuzzy from Timbuktoo. I will do my best to get Nehru to see some sense on this but fear that he will tell me that it is a decision of a large committee which cannot now be altered.

3. Secondly, these two Sub-Committees cheerfully propose to coopt a couple of local folk wherever they go. Quite how they will interpret this remains to be seen but I would not put it past them to coopt a couple of Khasis and hang on to them for their discussions with the Nagas, Luseis, Mishmis, Daflas. However I gather that there is a chance that the peripatetic Sub-Committee will discard the two local chaps when they leave the area of any particular

tribe and pick up another couple when they go on to the next tribe. No one seems to know quite how these local boys are to be selected.

4. The whole thing is mere folly. We had taken the trouble to provide the Constituent Assembly Secretariat with a factual memorandum and Iengar tells me that that was duly passed around, but it seems to have been completely ignored. However, I will go to work on Nehru again.

Yours
Hugh

39. Secretary of State's Reservations about Congress Acceptance

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for India on Indian Policy, 6 February 1947
PRO, CAB 134/344, Acc No. 4042, NAI.

SECRET

I circulate for the consideration of my colleagues two draft telegrams to the Viceroy, replying further to his telegram 219-S and 220-S to which an interim reply was sent after the meeting of the Committee on Wednesday. These telegrams should issue on Friday evening at latest since the Parliamentary Question to which they refer has to be answered on Monday.

2. Congress have come a considerable way to meet our point of view but for the reasons given in the first draft telegram I feel convinced that we should not, as the Viceroy proposes, make a public statement that we consider that Congress have accepted the Mission's Proposals. I am surprised that the Viceroy, after our experience of the previous Congress acceptance subject to reservations, should not be more cautious. Apart from the reservations in the Congress Resolution of 6th January, which are certainly less conspicuous than before, certain provisions have been made in the Rules of Procedure adopted by the Constituent Assembly. These are explained in IB (47) 14. These Rules go a long way to ensure that the Congress objectives are secured by removing all matters affecting minority protection from the purview of the Sections, and these matters can be reasonably held to include the composition of the Provincial Legislatures (and especially the vital question of separate electorates) by which the option whether to remain in a Group will be taken.

3. Further, we must be careful that we do not become committed in advance, to fulfil in respect of a Constituent Assembly in which the League, and possibly also the States, are not represented the undertakings given in respect of the Constituent Assembly proposed by the Cabinet Mission. In the Statement of 25th May (Cmd.6835 page 3) we said:

The authority and functions of the Constituent Assembly and the procedure which it is intended to follow are clear from the Cabinet Delegation's Statement. Once the Constituent Assembly is formed and working on this basis there is no intention of interfering with its discretion or questioning its decisions. When the Constituent Assembly has completed its labours, HMG will recommend to Parliament such action as may be necessary for the cession of sovereignty to the Indian people subject only to two matters adequate provision for protection of minorities and willingness to conclude a Treaty....

4. We may well find ourselves presented with a constitution for the whole of India made by a Constituent Assembly in which the Muslim League and the States have not been represented. The Congress will say that the Constituent Assembly has been formed and has functioned upon the basis proposed by the Mission, and is the representative instrument of the Indian people to

which sovereignty should be transferred. The last paragraph of the Statement of 6th December, however, stated that we should not contemplate forcing such a constitution on unwilling parts of the country. It is therefore, essential to maintain the position that a Constituent Assembly from which the League is absent is not one 'formed and working on the basis of' the Cabinet Mission's plan.

5. I therefore consider that we should avoid any statement of the kind the Viceroy proposes and give a stalling reply to the Question in Parliament on Monday, as proposed in the second draft telegram. But I think the Committee should consider, early next week, whether we should now issue a Statement on the lines of that prepared while the Viceroy was here (CP(47) 1) and I have included in the telegram a request for the Viceroy's view on this proposal.

40. 'Gandhiji's Advice to Muslim League'

The Hindustan Times, 6 February 1947

SADHURKHIL (Noakhali) 4 Feb.—Addressing the prayer gathering here yesterday Mahatma Gandhi referred to the Karachi resolution of the All-India Muslim League on the Constituent Assembly and said that he would plead with the Muslim League that they should go to the Assembly and state their case and influence the proceedings.

As regards the British Government he said that they were bound to act according to the State Paper, and he hoped that they would not forfeit all credit for honest dealing with India.

Gandhiji thought that the League did not mean what it said when it characterized the Congress resolution to be dishonest. He pleaded that there should be no imputation of dishonesty by one to the other. It was not good, he thought, for great organizations to regard one another as enemies. That practice would not lead them to independence.

If the elections and proceedings were illegal, the legality should be challenged in a court of law. Otherwise, he said, the charge had no meaning. If they did not wish to recognize the courts as, Gandhiji said, he did in 1920 and later then the talk of illegality should cease.

Gandhiji said that he would plead with the League that they should go to the Assembly and state their case and influence the proceedings. But if they did not he would advise them to test the sincerity of the Assembly and see how it dealt with the Muslim problem. It was due to themselves and the rest of the country unless they wanted to rely upon the law of the sword which Gandhiji was sure, they did not wish to do.

Assembly Representative

Then the League had said he continued, that the Assembly represented only the Caste Hindus. Surely there were in the Assembly Scheduled Castes, Christians, Parsis, Anglo Indians and all those who considered themselves sons of India. Dr Ambedkar was good enough to attend the Assembly not to mention other large number of the Scheduled Castes. The Sikhs too were still there. It was open to the League to put up their fight within the Assembly.

As to the British Government who the League contended should dismiss the Assembly, Gandhiji remarked that he entertained the hope, though he admitted it was somewhat shaken, that they would honestly carry to the end the voluntary document. He submitted that the British Government was bound to act according to the State Paper even if a few provinces chose to

establish their independence in accordance with the Paper, Gandhiji hoped that the British would not forfeit all credit for honest dealing with India.

Concluding he said, that whilst he felt obliged to refer to League politics he would warn the audience against inferring that Hindus and Muslims were to regard each other as enemies.—API

41. 'League Decision on Constituent Assembly Was Only Alternative to Selfish Attitude of Congress—Latifur Rahman'

Dawn, 6 February 1947

'Muslim League is very anxious to contribute its share in the constitution making of this vast sub-continent but most unfortunately the major political party's behaviour is every day receding the prospect of any settlement between the two nations of India,' says Mr Latifur Rehman MLA, President, All-India Momin Conference in a statement from New Delhi.

'If the Congress sincerely desires the freedom of the country', he continued, 'there is still time left that it should honestly come forward and gain the confidence of the Muslim India which has been completely shaken off by the recent happenings, specially the Bihar riots.

'The decisions taken by the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League have been arrived at after every careful and deep deliberations lasting for days together. The gravity of the situation in the country and all pros and cons were duly taken note of. The decision about the Constituent Assembly was the only alternative left to the Muslim League owing to the most selfish and sophisticated attitude adopted by the Congress all along.'

Regarding the Punjab, he expressed his deep sense of satisfaction and pride on the very discipline and peaceful sacrifice by the Musalmans of the Punjab, he was sure that the rising tide of the Muslim determination to undo the ban on civil liberties will very soon reach the point when it will be impossible for the Punjab Government to check it any longer.

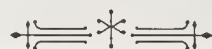
GOAL NEARER

He said, he was glad that things in India were shaping so rapidly that the attainment of our goal of free Islam in free India seems to be becoming much nearer than was ever expected, and undoubtedly the Bihar riots and the Punjab situation are one of them.

Regarding the situation prevailing in Bihar, he told that wherever he went and whomsoever he met, Indians or Europeans, the first question put to him was regarding the horrible brutalities perpetrated by the overwhelming majority on unaware and defenceless Muslim minority of Bihar. He found deep sympathy for the sincere desire to help the sufferers.

He had long consultations with the members of the Sind Government and all concerned and he was glad to say that Sind Government were planning to give all possible help to Bihar Muslim refugees but as the problem involved is a complicated one and requires serious planning and time; he advises the Bihar Muslims not to go there in a hurry but must consult the Provincial Relief Committee and the Muslim League before taking any steps to avoid any future difficulty anywhere.

Mr Latifur Rehman is leaving Delhi for Bihar on 5 February—OPI



42. League Interpretation of Congress Statement

Letter from Liaquat Ali Khan to Wavell, 8 February 1947
IOR, R/3/1/130, Acc. No. 3448, NAI.

FINANCIAL MEMBER OF COUNCIL,
8-B HARDINGE AVENUE, NEW DELHI.

Dear Lord Wavell,

With reference to my interview with you on Thursday when you informed me that the 9 non-League Members of the Executive Council had written to you asking that five of us who represent the Muslim League in the Government should resign because the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League by its Karachi resolution had declined to convene a meeting of the All-India League Council for the purpose of rescinding its Bombay resolution of 29 July whereby the earlier acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's plan was withdrawn, I consider it necessary to place on record the reactions of my other four colleagues of the Muslim League bloc and myself.

You will recall that immediately after the publication of the Cabinet Mission's Statement of 16 May the Congress put forward certain interpretations of their own particularly with regard to paragraphs 15, 19(V) and 19(VIII) of that Statement, which interpretations were *prima facie* untenable and inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the Cabinet Mission's Statement. The Cabinet Mission who were then in this country took cognizance of these misinterpretations put by the Congress on fundamental points of principle and procedure, and within nine days of the publication of their first Statement they issued another Statement on 25 May in which they made it quite clear that the interpretations which the Congress had put forward did not accord with the intentions of the Cabinet Mission.

It was in view of these specific provisions in the Cabinet Mission's Plan regarding Groups and Sections as clarified and interpreted by the Cabinet Mission on the 25th of May and the belief that the Plan will be worked out in letter and spirit by all the Parties with goodwill and sincerity that the Council of the All-India Muslim League decided to accept that Plan by its resolution of 6 June. The Congress Working Committee however passed a resolution on 25 June in which it still adhered to its own interpretations and professed to 'accept' the Statement of 16 May subject to its right to proceed on the basis of these wrong interpretations. The same wrong interpretations were repeated by Congress leaders in their speeches at the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay in the first week of July, 1946, and thereafter innumerable statements were made by them which proved that the so-called acceptance of the statement of 16 May by the Congress was no acceptance at all.

By this time the Muslim League was convinced that the Congress was pursuing a dishonest course and that it was determined to use its brute majority in the Constituent Assembly to alter the Cabinet Mission's Plan according to its own interpretations and not implement it on the basis laid down by the Cabinet Mission themselves and clarified by them in their Statement of 25 May. Accordingly Mr Jinnah and myself issued public statements drawing the attention of His Majesty's Government to continued Congress insistence on misinterpreting fundamental provisions of the State Paper to their own advantage and we asked HMG to take cognizance of these Congress declarations and to set matters right. Shortly afterwards a debate on India was held in both Houses of Parliament but in course of their speeches in the House of Lords and in the House of Commons respectively Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Sir Stafford Cripps,

far from giving any assurance and making any declaration that they would prevent Congress from acting contrary to the correct interpretation of the State Paper as given by the Cabinet Mission themselves and as accepted by the Muslim League, on the contrary, made statements which encouraged the Congress in thinking that the British Government were powerless to intervene and that the Congress could twist and distort the Statement of 16 May to suit its own purpose.

Accordingly, the Council of the All-India Muslim League when it met at Bombay on 27–29 July last year had no alternative but to withdraw its acceptance and to decline to come into Constituent Assembly where not the agreed plan of 16 May but a plan basically different from it was going to be pursued by the sheer weight of Hindu majority.

That this view of the Muslim League was correct and its decision of 29 July was justified was proved beyond any shadow of doubt during the London discussions in the first week of December when the Prime Minister and the members of the Cabinet Mission were brought face to face with realities and had to issue their Statement of 6 December in which they admitted that while the Muslim League's interpretation accorded with their own, the Congress had put forward a different view, and they urged the Congress to accept the correct interpretation or refer the matter to the Federal Court.

You will also recall that both Mr Jinnah and myself in our discussions with the Cabinet Mission and yourself in London urged the necessity of providing for some sort of an umpire for the settlement of disputes on other questions of interpretation which might arise from time to time in the course of the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly and the Sections. The Cabinet Mission and you recognized the necessity for such a provision and accordingly the Statement of 6 December contained the following paragraph:

It is, however, feared that other questions of interpretation of the Statement of 16 May may arise and His Majesty's Government hope that if the Council of the Muslim League are able to agree to participate, they will also agree, as has the Congress, that the Federal Court should be asked to decide matters of interpretation that may be referred to them by either side and will accept such a decision, so that the procedure, both in the Union Constituent Assembly and in the Sections, may accord with the Cabinet Mission Plan.

I would now like to draw your attention to the subsequent decisions of the Congress and statements by some of the foremost Congress leaders, notably Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, with regard to (1) the correct interpretation of paragraphs 19(V) and 19(VIII) of the 16 May Statement, and (2) the provision that other questions of interpretation shall be referred to the Federal Court.

By its resolution of 22 December the Congress Working Committee declined to refer the question of interpretation of what HMG's 6 December Statement described as 'the fundamental point', to the Federal Court, and the Working Committee decided to summon the All-India Congress Committee for the purpose of considering the matter. The AICC thereafter passed a resolution purporting to agree to advise action in accordance with the interpretation of the British Government in regard to the procedure to be followed in the Sections but at the same time laying down such conditions, reservation and qualifications which totally nullify the effect of the advice. In the view of the Muslim League this resolution of the Congress is in no way different in effect from the Congress resolution of 25 June, rather it makes the position worse in so far as it confers a right of veto not only on a province but also on a part of a Province and the Sikhs. The Muslim League is convinced, as must be any honest and impartial person, that the Congress has not accepted the Cabinet Mission's Statement of 16 May as interpreted by

their Statement of 25 May and as further interpreted by His Majesty's Government's Statement of 6 December. The resolutions passed, the rules framed and certain decisions taken so far by the so-called Constituent Assembly prove that the Congress has already violated some of the fundamentals of the Cabinet Mission's Plan. It clearly indicates that the Congress had never intended nor does it intend to abide by the terms of the Mission's Plan.

With regard to reference of other questions of interpretation to the Federal Court, no mention was made in the resolution of the Congress but Pandit Nehru, in course of his speech at the AICC on 6 January made it quite clear that Congress definitely and categorically rejects the procedure laid down in the 6 December Statement and declared that it was for the Constituent Assembly alone to give interpretation of the State Paper of 16 May.

Following these decisions by the Congress Working Committee and the AICC there was considerable controversy as to whether Congress had really accepted the 6 December Statement or not. Accordingly, several days before the Working Committee of the Muslim League was due to meet at Karachi, I issued a statement to the Press putting the following categorical questions and suggested that on behalf of the Congress clear-cut answers to these questions might be given through the public Press to resolve doubts....

Although most of the top ranking Congress Leaders were then in Delhi, no reply was given on behalf of the Congress.

The position, therefore, is that while the Muslim League originally accepted the Cabinet Mission's Statement of 16 May in letter and in spirit and in its correct interpretation, but was subsequently compelled to withdraw its acceptance, Congress at no time accepted that Statement and does not now accept it. It is clear from HMG's Statement of 6 December 1946 that up to that time the Congress had not accepted some of the essentials and fundamentals of the Cabinet Mission's Plan. They urged the Congress to accept the reaffirmation of the intentions of the Cabinet Mission with regard to those fundamental points. The Congress has not only not done so by its resolution of 6 January 1947, but on the contrary has made the matter worse by going back on the agreement to accept the decision of the Federal Court on other questions of interpretation of the Statement of 16 May. The question of reconsideration by the Muslim League of its July resolution does not arise so long as the Congress does not unequivocally accept HMG's Statement of 6 December, 1946.

In the result, therefore, if the basis of the participation in the Interim Government were acceptance of the Statement of 16 May, then the Congress which has not accepted it and the Sikhs who have definitely rejected it have no greater right to have their representatives or nominees in the Government than the Muslim League has.

In the circumstances it is extremely presumptuous on the part of the 9 non-League members of the Executive Council to demand that their Muslim League Colleagues should resign.

I am herewith enclosing a copy of the Karachi resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Muslim League which deals with the matter in greater detail and which may be regarded as a part of this communication. I hope you will be good enough to convey to HMG the text of this letter and the enclosed resolution so that they may have full material before them to understand the real position.

Yours Sincerely
Liaquat Ali Khan



43. 'League's Blackmail to Enforce Undemocratic Features of British Plan—Report by G. Adhikari'

Extracts from a Report from *People's Age*, 9 February 1947.

The decision of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League, not to enter the Constituent Assembly but to demand its immediate dissolution, brings to a head the conflict inside the freedom-front between the Congress and League. Things are speeding towards a decisive show-down between the two organizations, thanks to the wily manoeuvres of imperialism.

What threatened to develop into a conflict between the Government and the Congress on the eve of the London Conference has been successfully turned into a prelude to another and a bitter round of fratricidal fight—which, whatever its outcome, will leave the whip hand with imperialism.

The vicious logic of the present development leaves only two unenviable alternatives:

Either the show-down results in the Congress agreeing to accept in toto the undemocratic provision of the Imperialist Plan, namely, compulsory grouping of provinces and a weak centre, which is what the League is demanding.

In that case the League would come into the Constituent Assembly and the constitution which the latter would frame would be ratified by imperialism.

But that constitution would be one which would ensure the permanence of British domination through the retention of the Princes and through the perpetuation of Hindu-Muslim conflict.

Or, in the alternative, the show-down results in a permanent breach between the Congress and the League; the Congress continues in the Constituent Assembly and frames an all-India constitution while the League remains out and continues fratricidal struggles against the Congress.

In that case, imperialism would not ratify the Congress sponsored constitution but give a new award based on partition of India and ensuring British domination and slavery for both the parts.

But this is not how the Congress and League leading circles are looking at the outcome of the recent decision of the League Working Committee....

WHERE DOES IT LEAD?

The Congress leadership is thus looking forward to a full scale show-down with the Muslim League as inescapable and necessary.

Pursuing the bankrupt policy of collaboration with imperialism on the basis of its Plan, the Congress leadership is walking straight into another round of fratricidal war—planned by imperialism—which will lead not to independence and power to the Indian people, but to arbitrary partition and slavery to a divided India.

The Muslim League leadership has pompously declared that it has finally rejected the British Cabinet Plan; that it is demanding the dissolution of the present Constituent Assembly; and that it is fighting Anglo-Hindu imperialist conspiracy against the Muslim and for the freedom of the Muslim and the independence of India.

The vast mass of anti-imperialist Muslims who follow the League and believe in these protestations, are being led not into the common front for winning independence, but into a

fratricidal war against the Congress, in the name of fighting Anglo-Hindu conspiracy, thus to split and sabotage the common struggle for freedom.

WHY LEAGUE REJECTS

The fact of the matter is that the Muslim League leadership rejects the Plan and demands the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly not because it objects to the reactionary features of the Plan or to the non-sovereign character of the Assembly.

On the contrary, its opposition and non-cooperation are a sort of a threat and blackmail to ensure all the more rigorously the enforcement of the reactionary features of the Plan, to ensure that the Constituent Assembly does not act in a sovereign manner but strictly in accordance with the restrictions and rules implicit in the British Plan.

Now it is well-known that the British Plan had rejected the Muslim League demand for setting up sovereign independent State in the Muslim majority zones in the North-West and the North-East.

But it went on to show hypocritical concern for the fear of the Muslims that they would be oppressed in a united India.

As a solution, the Plan proposed the formation of sub-States in the two groups of Province in the two Muslim-majority zones in the North-West and the North-East.

The Muslim League leadership clutched at this idea as the 'seed of Pakistan', and insisted that the decision to form group States must be taken by a simple majority of the delegates in the Sections, thus overriding the right of the Provinces in the groups to decide for themselves.

This undemocratic demand was granted by the London Award of 6 December which is now a part of the Plan.

The imperialists have made grouping the crux of their Plan, not because they wanted to save the masses of the common Muslims from the supposed Hindu domination but because they wanted to perpetuate Hindu-Muslim conflict by encouraging the Muslim League leadership to persist in its communal disruptive policies.

The Muslim League leadership cheats its mass following among the Muslims when it tells them that the Cabinet Mission Plan, in as much as it concedes the principles of compulsory grouping is a plan which guarantees freedom to the Muslims.

For, it does not tell them that under it the oppressive autocratic rule of the Princes over 100 million States people is guaranteed and not the freedom of the people and their democratic rights....

IS THIS FREEDOM?

Patriotic Muslims, who follow the Muslim League seeing in it an organization fighting for the freedom of the country and the well-being and freedom of the Muslims; anti-imperialist Muslims, who are prepared to face lathi-charges and bullets at its behest, as they are doing in the Punjab in fighting for civil liberties, must coolly consider the meaning of these demands, which their leadership is placing before the British Government.

- Have these demands anything in common with the demand for the independence of the country and the freedom and equality for the Muslims and their well-being for which the League leaders claim to fight? Nothing at all.
- How can a joint acceptance of the Imperialist Plan based on the retention of Princely autocracy which oppresses Hindus and Muslims alike, lead to independence?

- How can the joint acceptance of the Imperialist Plan based on compulsory grouping which perpetuates Hindu–Muslim conflict and thus disrupts the joint struggle of Hindu and Muslim masses for land, bread and freedom, ever lead to the freedom and well-being of the Muslims?
- Can a leadership which turns to the imperialist oppressor with the demand to divide the country, be ever said to be fighting for the freedom of the peoples?

In the last few weeks the communal tension was showing signs of subsiding. Muslim and Hindu masses were jointly participating in great common struggles, like the Tebhaga movement in Bengal, common strike struggles as in Cawnpore and Calcutta.

In Punjab, in a struggle for civil liberties precipitated by the provocative action of White bureaucrats against the Muslim National Guards, the following of the Muslim League had shown political wisdom and strength in keeping the movement non-communal and foiling the efforts of riot-mongers and provocateurs.

But this new move of the League leadership is bound to precipitate Congress–League and Hindu–Muslim conflict in an intensified form.

The League Executive has not only called for the dissolution of the Assembly but has also passed a number of other resolutions raising grievances to denounce a number of Congress Ministers in Muslim minority Provinces.

In a general resolution the League Executive has denounced the Government and officials of the Congress-governed Provinces for their failure to protect the life and property of Muslims, urged upon the Governors to use their special powers to afford protection to Muslims, and has finally called upon the Muslims to resist ‘oppression and injustice of the tyrannical majority.’

There is a resolution condemning the mass evictions of Muslim peasants from grazing reserves of Assam, another criticizing the imposing of collective fines and taking of hostages from the tribes in the NWF tribal area.

There is still another resolution condemning Bihar Ministry for failing to afford adequate shelter and security to Muslim refugees who escaped from the fearful communal carnage of Monghyr.

A further resolution called for disciplined non-violent dignified and non-communal fight of the Muslims in the Punjab for civil liberties.

Many of the grievances raised may be justified but the manner in which they are raised, namely, as Muslim grievances as against Congress Ministries, is bound to lead to a greater communal tension.

We have already pointed out what the Congress counterstrategy to the League’s move to boycott the Constituent Assembly is going to be. The Congress would continue to work it and frame the constitution taking care to follow as closely as possible the imperialist imposed restrictions on constitution-making. They thus hope to get the British Government to ratify the constitution and impose it upon the whole of India.

In the meanwhile, it would seek to put down any resistance of [*sic*] struggle launched by the League, by the use of Government repression.

It will be rousing its own following against the Muslim League by denouncing the ‘Anglo–Muslim Conspiracy’.

BREAK WITH THE PLAN

But it will never be able to win the Muslim masses or turn them away from the reactionary policy of their leadership as long as it itself collaborates with the British Imperialist Plan, hoping

to turn it against the League leadership. As long as it does so will the League leaders be able to keep their mass following in the orbit of their reactionary policy by denouncing before them the 'Anglo-Hindu Conspiracy'.

Thus both the policies—the Congress policy of compromise and of failure to win the Muslim masses and the League's policy of diverting the anti-imperialist urge of the Muslim masses into anti-Congress hatred—only lead to sharpening of the Congress-League and Hindu-Muslim conflict, leaving the initiative entirely in imperialist hands....

44. 'Gandhiji's Faith in Cabinet Mission's "Bona Fides"'

Extracts from a Report from *The Hindustan Times*, 12 February 1947.

VIJOYNAGAR (Noakhali), 11 Feb.—**Mahatma Gandhi said in his prayer speech here today that he would not accuse the Cabinet Mission of double-dealing. He was replying to a question suggesting that the double-faced policy of the Cabinet Mission was at the root of the present troubles between the Congress and the League and ultimately between the Hindus and Muslims.**

The Cabinet Mission, Gandhiji said, had honestly suggested a solution which in their opinion was fair.

The beauty of the State Paper was that it contained no compulsion. Naturally, after acceptance, the clauses became obligatory on the accepting parties, but any party could refuse acceptance. Thus, if Assam in the east and Baluchistan in the west rejected grouping, no power on earth could compel them under the Cabinet Mission's Paper.

Lastly, said Gandhiji assuming that the Cabinet Mission's plan was a trap why should the Congress and the League fall into the trap?...

45. 'India and HMG'

Editorial from *The Hindustan Times*, 13 February 1947.

There has been a great deal of speculation as to the attitude of the British Government towards the Muslim League Working Committee's Karachi resolution. There have been reports suggesting that the British Government may make a new statement and that a Cabinet Minister may be sent to India to start fresh negotiations. All these tend to create an atmosphere of uncertainty and apprehension regarding immediate developments in the Indian political situation. There is no doubt that the present *impasse* is due to two capital blunders—one made by Lord Wavell and the other by the British Government. Lord Wavell should have reduced to black and white his understanding with Mr Jinnah that the Muslim League would participate in the Constituent Assembly before he took the League representatives into the Interim Government. We have no doubt that Lord Wavell was all the time under the impression that Mr Jinnah had accepted the condition specifically stated in Para 9 of the Viceroy's letter of 4 October, namely, that 'since the basis of participation in the Cabinet is of course, acceptance of the statement of the 16th May, I assume that the League Council will meet at a very early date to reconsider its Bombay resolution.' Before the Congress members of the Interim Government agreed to the inclusion of Muslim League nominees, they called upon the Viceroy to state definitely whether the Muslim League had accepted the long-term plan, and Lord Wavell wrote to Pandit Nehru on 23 October: 'I have made it clear to Mr Jinnah, whom I have seen today, that the Muslim League's entry into the Interim Government is conditional on the acceptance of the scheme of

the Cabinet delegation contained in the statement of 16 May and explained in the statement of 25 May and that he must call his council at an early date to agree to this.'

When it turned out that either Lord Wavell had misunderstood Mr Jinnah or the latter had let down the Viceroy, a second blunder was committed to cover up the first. Instead of telling the Muslim League that it should fulfil the other part of its undertaking or quit the Interim Government, the British Government called a conference in London to discuss an entirely irrelevant issue. Whatever the Congress view about the voting in the Sections might be, there was nothing to prevent the Muslim League group in the Constituent Assembly from asserting its own view and even enforcing it in the Sections in which it had a majority. When the Constituent Assembly elections were ordered and the members were elected according to the Cabinet Mission's plan of 16 May, the views of individuals and political parties regarding the interpretation of the plan ceased to be of importance. The Assembly itself became seized of the entire issue. Disregarding this obvious position the British Government issued the statement of 6 December giving a ruling regarding voting in Sections. Even this was accepted by the All-India Congress Committee on 6 January. In spite of this, the Muslim League has sought to raise a new dispute as to whether the Congress has accepted the statement of 6 December completely. It is argued without any justification that this statement, which amounted merely to an expression of opinion and an appeal, has become an integral part of the Cabinet Mission's plan of 16 May.

This farcical dispute relating to acceptance must end. The Constituent Assembly has come into existence and is functioning. Those who participate in it, what ever their views, must be deemed to have accepted the long-term plan and those who boycott the Assembly plainly have not done so. This is the only test valid in the circumstances. The League would be perfectly entitled to take its own view on any issue that may arise in the Constituent Assembly or in the Sections. But they cannot stay out and claim some merit because they once accepted the scheme and later rejected it for some reasons. We do not see what the British Government can do except to ask the League to participate in the Constituent Assembly or quit the Interim Government. All the present manoeuvres of its members have the single objective of enabling the Muslim League to stay in the Interim Government without participating in the Constituent Assembly. It would be an intolerable situation if the Central Government in India should be paralysed by the presence of a hostile section deliberately opposed to and resolved to wreck the long-term plan for the implementation of which the Interim Government has been formed. Any attempt by the British Government to interfere with the work of the Constituent Assembly or put further pressure on the Congress whether by deputing a Cabinet Minister to visit this country or by any other means will cause the gravest misunderstanding. A third blunder will not rectify the two blunders which have caused unnecessary and dangerous complications. The Constituent Assembly is the only hope for peaceful transfer of power. To the extent that the British Government strengthen its hands and discourage the wreckers, they will be fulfilling the pledge embodied in the statement of 16 May.



46. Hindu Mahasabha Reactions to Karachi Resolution

Statement by L.B. Bhopatkar, President, All India Hindu Mahasabha, at New Delhi, 14 February 1947

All India Hindu Mahasabha Papers (hereafter AIHM Papers), File No. C-165, NMML.

The two burning questions of the day are firstly, the resolution passed at Karachi by the Working Committee of the Muslim League, and secondly: the reaction of the Princely order in regard to the resolution passed by the Constituent Assembly on its own objectives, the establishment by the said order of a Negotiating Committee, and its readiness to enter the Constituent Assembly only on the fulfilment of certain terms and conditions which it has laid down in this behalf.

The Karachi resolution of the Muslim League Working Committee, abnormally lengthy as it is, makes really an interesting reading. The resolution asserts that the Congress has not in reality accepted the final appeal of His Majesty's Government, has thrown overboard the very fundamentals of the Cabinet Mission's Plan, and has converted the Constituent Assembly into a body of its own conception. The resolution has characterized the Assembly's objectives, particularly that of the establishment of a Republic here, as illegal and ultra vires, as it went beyond the scope of the Cabinet Mission Plan. It has declared that in such circumstances no compromise was possible, and it has finally asked the British Government to declare the Plan of 16th May, 1946 as null and void.

Regarding the Karachi resolution as it is and between its lines, it indicates a clear intention on the League's part to leave the Constituent Assembly severely alone, and if possible, even to torpedo it from outside, and to resort to direct action for the attainment of its political objectives. Some of the front-rank League leaders have even gone to the length of referring to Mughal Empire and thereby inflaming the Muslim mass mind and firing it with the aspirations to establish a Muslim Raj not only in the North-Western and North-Eastern parts, but over all the parts of India. The outbursts that have uptill now taken place in different parts of India and are even now taking place are but symptomatic of the nature of the direct action threatened.

In such a circumstance, it is the duty of the people of India, more in the interests of the Moslems themselves than of the other communities, to appreciate this danger in its proper perspective, to mobilize and consolidate all national resources, and to make the dreamers of the Muslim Raj realize that they are living in but a fool's paradise. I may caution my Muslim brethren that whatever the past history of India may be, if in the twentieth century they sow the wind, they will have nothing else but a whirlwind to reap. The atrocities committed so far would have assuredly been nipped in the bud, if the Central and Provincial Government had been only a little more vigilant and assertive in the maintenance of public peace and tranquility. Even now the destructive elements in the society can be crushed out of existence with due care and circumspection.

As regards the Indian States, the questions relating to paramountcy and Divine Right of Kings are more academical than real in nature. It has now come to be an accepted canon of modern political thought that all sovereignty vests in the people. We see as a fact throughout the whole world that the one-man rule is fast giving place to popular sovereignty and that the on-rush of new ideas and ideals is sweeping away before itself the already crumbling thrones and Kingships. It is, therefore, the psychological time for the Indian Princely Order to rise to the occasion, to join the Constituent Assembly by giving adequate representation thereon to their own people, and to introduce responsible government in their own States as speedily

as possible, after reserving such dynastic and personal rights and privileges as would prove more a help than hindrance thereto. Herein lies their tradition and their salvation as well. The Congress should also realize that it is bad strategy to fight on two fronts.

According to the Cabinet Mission Plan the Constituent Assembly consists of 292 members from British India and 93 for the Indian States. Out of 292 the Moslems are awarded only 78 representatives, that is to say, only about one-fourth of the representation for British India and about one-fifth of the total representation for British India and Indian States. In Section A the Moslems are only 20 in total of 187 members, in Section B they are 22 in a total of 35, and in Section C there is a neck-to-neck competition, in that they are only 36 in a total of 70. In face of these figures, there is every reason for the Constituent Assembly to proceed with the work of framing the Constitution not only for Section A, but for Section B and C as well.

Here a question arises, to wit, whether the Muslim League, in view of its Karachi Resolution, is entitled to retain its seats on the Interim Government. In fairness it must be said that it is not so entitled, as the Interim Government and the Constituent Assembly are but integral parts of the Cabinet Mission's Plan as a whole, and the League's boycott of the Constituent Assembly makes it incumbent upon it to vacate its seats on the Interim Government. If the League refuses to do so, it is upto His Majesty's Government to compel it to this course of action.

It is clear as daylight that the Cabinet Mission Proposals are a cross between the right principles of a political constitution and the fantastic demands of the Muslim League, and as such, it is doubtful as to whether the Constituent Assembly will ultimately give birth to a living babe of a political constitution or to a mere abortion thereof. It will be no surprise if it does the latter.

The Hindu Mahasabha, therefore warned the Congress in June last not to accept the Proposals unless they are satisfactorily modified in certain essential particulars. It is really inexplicable as to why the Congress displayed almost indecent haste in accepting it. Surely the heavens would not have fallen if the Congress had delayed the acceptance and thereby forced the Cabinet Mission to make saner and fairer proposals.

The Hindu Mahasabha is of the opinion that when and if the Constituent Assembly is deemed to be a sovereign body, it is entitled to frame a constitution for India not necessarily within the framework of the Cabinet Mission Plan, but on purely nationalistic and democratic lines in such a manner as to render justice to all and injustices to none.

With this object in view the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha has only recently appointed a Committee to lay down the outlines of a constitution which will be broad-based on the principles of equity, justice and fair play to all the communities and interests as also on such principles as will transform India into a strong and puissant nation to play her proper role in the comity of nations of the world by holding the scales even between the West and the East.



47. Report from Bengal Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report for Bengal for the First Half of February 1947,
18 February 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/2/47, NAI.

Political

1. Reactions have crystallized regarding the decision of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League taken at Karachi, asserting that the Congress had not accepted the Statement of the British Government, dated the 6th December, and demanding the withdrawal of the India Plan by the British Government. As already foreshadowed, the Muslim Leaguers here endorsed the view taken by the Working Committee. Only from Dacca comes the report that there was disappointment in the Dacca and Faridpur districts and a feeling of perplexibility in Mymensingh at the decision that was taken. In the Chittagong Division the decision had already been anticipated and any reactions that there might have been were overshadowed by indignation at the declaration of the Punjab Muslim National Guard as an unlawful association and the arrest of the Punjab Muslim League leaders.
2. The reactions to this step were reported to be mild in character. In West Bengal a few feeble demonstrations took place in three or four places; in the Presidency Division meetings were held in all the districts in protest against the action taken; in North Bengal the staging of *hartals* and other small demonstrations were reported from five districts fully supported by Muslim Leaguers; in Dacca, too meetings were held and *hartals* declared in many parts of the Division but they were all peaceful. Only in Chittagong did feelings run high and on the date when reports of the arrests were received all Muslim shops in Chittagong remained closed, courts were picketed and most of the officers and other staff were prevented from attending office. *Hartals* and processions took place in Noakhali and Tippera on subsequent dates.
3. The action taken by the Muslim League though not unexpected, has undoubtedly caused disappointment to the Hindus whose general reaction has been one of frustration coupled with a determination to proceed with the framing of a constitution and a feeling that the Muslim League should have no further part in the Interim Government....

48. Interpretations of 6 December Statement: Nehru and Wavell

Telegram from G.E.B. Abell to Ronald Harris, 1 March 1947

IOR, R/3/1/130, Acc. No. 3448, NAI.

IMPORTANT

NEW DELHI

CONFIDENTIAL

No. 386-S. Your 2813 of 28th February. Interview with Nehru on 21st February. Viceroy's recollection is that Nehru's argument was on lines that HMG has recognized that large bodies cannot be compelled into a constitution against their will, and that it was only logical that large minorities inside a Province, for example, the Hindus in Bengal and the Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab could also not be compelled into an unacceptable constitution. There

was some argument on the interpretation of 'parts of the country' in the last paragraph of the Statement of 6 December. Nehru argued that 'parts of the country' could mean 'parts of a Province.' Viceroy said that that was certainly not the intention of HMG and did not override the original statement in which existing Provinces were treated as a whole. Viceroy added that if the statement of the AICC was merely meant to emphasize the obvious truth that, any Constitution, Provincial, Group or Central, could only be formed with the consent of the great majority of the people, Congress should say so; but that if it implied that a part of a Province could secede during the process of constitution-making, this was entirely inconsistent with the acceptance of the Mission's Plan. Viceroy added that it was up to the Congress to make their intentions clear to the League. Viceroy does not remember any definite arguments about the Rules of Procedure.

Chapter 3. Functioning of the Interim Government

1. Disagreements of Nehru with the Muslim League and HMG

Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal Nehru, 1 January 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 438–9.

1. Nehru proposes that Azad should take the portfolio of Education, Dr Matthai Railways and Rajagopalachari go back to Industries and Supplies. He did not take at all kindly to the suggestion that he should discuss the redistribution with Liaquat Ali. I said that I would think the matter over.
2. Nehru also did not react very favourably to the proposal for a Sub-Committee to recommend names for posts abroad. This part of the discussion ended in my saying that I could not agree to recommend to His Majesty's Government his proposal for the Indian Agent-General in Ceylon (Ragavan?).
3. Nehru then attacked the Muslim League members of the Government on the usual lines, for non-co-operation. He instanced Liaquat's proposal to reopen the question of the salt tax and a decision recently taken by the Finance Department about the value of the rupee, without consulting the Cabinet.

Nehru then worked himself up into a denunciation of His Majesty's Government; he said the decision taken in London had not been fair to Congress; that His Majesty's Government's stock in India was down to zero so far as Congress was concerned; and that if they had done nothing for the last three or four months (that is, if they had given a full liberty of action to Congress), things would have been much better. I said that His Majesty's Government were doing their best to try and keep a united India, and Nehru burst out that he would sooner India was divided into a hundred parts than that they should in any way abandon their principles and give in to the Muslim League.

I kept emphasizing the point that they could not possibly get an agreed constitution for India without Muslim co-operation, and it was essential from their point of view that Congress should get the Muslim League into the Constituent Assembly, that the only way of doing so was to accept His Majesty's Government's statement of 6th December.

4. I then spoke about the speeches of Jai Prakash Narain, and said that it is an impossible position for a member of the Congress Working Committee to make such speeches. Did Congress approve them and if not what were they going to do about it? Nehru said that Congress did not approve his speeches, which were irresponsible and that he had resigned from Congress; but that his speeches did represent a very great and growing feeling of resentment against His Majesty's Government.

5. I then asked about the meeting of the Constituent Assembly on 20th January and the proposed programme. It was, I gathered simply to clear up the business postponed from the original meeting, that is, the resolution about a Republic and the various Committees.
6. I mentioned the question of a lump sum grant to the Afridis. His attitude was that the money would be much better spent on schools and hospitals, but that he would consider it.

Nehru's attitude generally was inclined to be one of rather sullen resentment that His Majesty's Government had changed their attitude of unqualified support to Congress, he said that the whole attitude of the Muslim League was based on their knowledge that His Majesty's Government would support them to the end. I merely said that the Muslim League took entirely the opposite view and thought that His Majesty's Government had given unqualified support to Congress.

W.

2. American Chargé Reiterates League's Continued Disagreement with Congress

Letter from Pethick-Lawrence to Clement Attlee, 1 January 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 439-40.

Prime Minister,

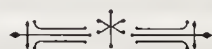
I think that you should be made aware of the gist of a recent talk between Mr Lewis Jones of the U.S. Embassy and a member of my staff. Mr Jones produced a copy of a telegram from New Delhi to Washington reporting to the State Department what had passed in a recent interview between the American Chargé and Mr Liaquat. The latter professed that he saw no present prospect of the League making any further conciliatory move. Its original acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's plan and joining of the Interim Government was as far as it could be expected to go in the light of subsequent developments. Mr Liaquat asserted that the numbers killed in Bihar were 30,000 in addition to 60,000 persons dispossessed. He said that Mr Nehru's refusal to agree to the constitution of Provincial Coalition Governments demonstrated his unfriendly attitude and there appeared to be no alternative to Pakistan for Muslims.

The British had made mistakes in (1) accepting at its face value the Congress' response to the statement of 16th May and (2) forming an Interim Executive of Congress only. Mr Liaquat had told Ministers in London that if they intended to quit India in a year or more they would be well advised to go now and leave Muslims to look after themselves rather than lend Congress meantime the strength that Office gives them to consolidate against Muslims. Mr Liaquat had been unable to extract from his interviews in London any indication of a policy on the part of HMG in the face of present developments.

The American Chargé concluded that it was vain to expect from the League any gesture towards Congress which would bridge the gap, in other words that his demarche had failed.

I am sending copies of this minute to the President of the Board of Trade and the Minister of Defence.

PETHICK-LAWRENCE



3. Patel Dismisses Propaganda against Him

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to M.K. Gandhi, 7 January 1947

P.N. Chopra (Ed.), *Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, Vol. XII, pp. 4–5.

NEW DELHI

REVERED BAPU,

I have received your letter. I indeed felt deeply pained over it. But you have written to me on the basis of complaints and reports that were made to you against me. Complaints therein are not only false but some of them are beyond my imagination.

The charge that I am lured by office is totally unfounded. Jawahar hurls threats to leave office off and on and I have objected to it as it lowers prestige of the Congress and casts a damaging effect on the Services. We must first decide finally if we have to relinquish power. But by issuing empty threats we have lost our prestige with the Viceroy and such threats now make no effect upon him. It was no bluff on my part when on his asking me to give up my portfolio, I at once decided to resign and it served the purpose. What good is to me in sticking to office? I am a bedridden man and I will be happy indeed if I could extricate myself from it. It, therefore, passes my comprehension why at all should you give credence to it.

That I speak insultingly of the League is an accusation which even any League leader has not made against me.

That I make my speeches with a view to please or satiate peoples' feelings is like a news to me. On the contrary, it is my habit to speak out unsavoury truths to people in the plainest manner. During the days of RIN Mutiny, I spoke to people in most unpalatable terms and quite a many felt hurt.

My utterance to the effect that 'a sword will be met by a sword' has been torn off from a long sentence of mine and a complaint thereof has been made to you.

All these accusations must have been dinned into your ears by Mridula for she has made it her pastime to heap abuses upon me. She is indulging in a nauseating propaganda that I want to get rid of Jawahar and also found a new Party. She has spoken in this manner at several places. She is not in the least reconcilable to any other view as divergent from that of Jawaharlal.

If there are any alienations in the Working Committee, it is not a new thing. They have been there since long. On the contrary, as we see it today, most of us are working as a team.

If these complaints have been made to you by any of my colleagues, I would certainly like to know about it. For none of them spoke of these complaints to me.

You wrote to me about Col Gill. I had agreed to his going there with an understanding that he should keep you fully informed about his work there and he should also carry it on with your approval and advice. He was asked to work there only if you would so permit him. Otherwise, I had asked him not to proceed with it. He was also instructed not to enlist more than 100 men from his Mission for the whole area. In all, only 40 persons, to my knowledge, have reached there. He also wrote to me that you have blessed him and approved of his plan of work. I have taken upon me to meet their expenses. I am not, to that end, drawing money from the Birlas. They are trying to get rid of you from there. But I would prefer not to comment upon it.

Hope you are keeping well.

VALLABHBHAI'S PRANAM

Mahatma Gandhi,
Srirampur (Noakhali)

4. Removal of British Personnel from India a Grave Concern

Extract from Wavell's Record of Conversation with Liaquat Ali Khan, 7 January 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 481-2.

7. I spoke to him about the Congress Resolution, accepting His Majesty's Government's statement of 6th December. I said that I very much hoped that it would now be possible for the Muslim League to call their Council and to come into the Constituent Assembly; it would be very hard to defend their action if they did not, and it would create a very bad impression in the UK and elsewhere. He said that it was not really a true acceptance and that Congress did not mean to be honest about it, he instanced the many speeches made against acceptance and the refusal of Congress to refer anything to the Federal Court. I said that there was much wild speaking and would continue to be so, but that I was quite sure that the only right tactics for the League was to come into the Constituent Assembly and state their case, if they found it impossible to get fair treatment they could of course reconsider their position. He said that he wished to go and see Mr Jinnah, who is still ill at Karachi at an early date.

8. He then went on to talk about non-financial matters. His first point was that appointments abroad should not be made on party lines; and he particularly instanced the appointment of Asaf Ali in which he was not consulted. He said that if the appointment was to be a Congress nominee he would much sooner that it had been a Hindu und [*sic*] not a Muslim.

I suggested a small committee of himself, Nehru and Matthai to consider these appointments. His reaction was that it would always be a majority decision and that Matthai would always vote with Congress. I said that the opinion of all three members would be recorded and that I should not necessarily accept the majority decision. He said he would have preferred two Congress and two League representatives on the Committee so that although they would never agree there would be no majority decision and I should get the suggestions of both parties. I said I thought that Matthai would often take an independent view and that these things should not be settled on purely party lines.

9. His last point was to express very great concern at the removal of British personnel from the Services and the Army, particularly the latter. He said that this meant turning the Army over entirely to Hindus. This led him to express the view that we were unfair in putting the Congress party into power in all departments; that we ought to restore our authority and rule India for a further period of years, until the parties agreed. I explained the difficulties of this and that we could not break our pledges to give India self-government at an early date. He said that it would be very wrong to leave India to chaos in this way; but that if we were going to do it we should leave 'fair chaos for both parties', and not remain to establish the Hindus in power.

The interview had lasted for an hour and quarter, and he said that he would not keep me any longer but that there were several other things he wished to talk to me about, especially the way the Information and Broadcasting was at present being run on purely party lines. I told him that he could always ask for a special interview at any time.

W.



5. Officials Suggest Muslim League Join Constituent Assembly

Minutes by Mr Scott and Wavell, 8 January 1947

T.O.P., Vol. IX, p. 488.

He [V.P. Menon] should be asked his ideas of what should be done if the Muslim League does not join the Constituent Assembly. The recent resolution of the AICC was carried against opposition from the right-wing Hindu Mahasabhaites and the left-wing socialists, led by J.P. Narain. The position of the Congress Centre (Patel, Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, etc) is continuously under criticism from these two flanks, and it will have to show results if it is to maintain itself. This can presumably only be done by demanding that the Muslim League enter the Constituent Assembly or leave the Government.

I.D. SCOTT

8. 1. 1947

V.P.M. has rather become the mouthpiece of Patel. He was quite interesting on the dissensions in Congress and the decline of the Administration, and thinks that Congress will be hard put to it to hold their own with the Left Wing.

He thinks Muslim League ought now to come into C.A. and may do so, but is doubtful whether any result will emerge.

W.

[undated]

6. Muslim League's Dilemma

Extract from a Letter from Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 14 January 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 501-3.

PRIVATE AND SECRET

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE, NEW DELHI

Thank you for your letter of 2nd January. I have passed on your commendation of the handling of the Rajkot affair to the Political Department.

2. I have telegraphed to you separately about Amery's visit. While I would have preferred in some ways that he did not come, I have no reason to object.

3. I was interested in the account of Liaquat Ali's interview with the American Chargé d'Affaires. Liaquat has told me the same sort of thing, and in fact said that if we did intend to leave India to chaos, he hoped that it would be 'chaos fair for both parties', and that we would not remain to establish the Hindus in power. (I am reminded of the prayer of the American hunter who encountered a bear on a narrow path: 'O Lord, help me if you can; but if you can't, for heaven's sake don't you help that bear.') I have impressed on him that the right thing for the League to do is to join the Constituent Assembly and state their case. If they found it impossible to get fair treatment, they could then reconsider their position. No one of the Muslim leaders, however, is willing to commit himself definitely in the absence of a lead from Jinnah; and as the Working Committee of the League has been called for 29th and 30th January in Karachi, we shall not know for another two or three weeks what they intend. I left him in no doubt that failure to come into the Constituent Assembly would forfeit most of the sympathy which the Muslim League now has in the outside world.

4. Burrows has reported to me a similar conversation which he had with Nazimuddin, in which he (Burrows) indulged in a considerable amount of plain speaking, and said in effect that the Muslim League were now at the cross roads, and would either have to enter the Constituent Assembly or go into opposition, either active or passive: in either of these latter cases their movement would be finished. Nazimuddin is a sensible person, and I have no doubt will use his influence in the right direction when the Working Committee meets. I saw Suhrawardy recently and put the issue plainly to him.

5. Until a decision is reached, politics and administration will remain in a state of suspended animation. Cabinet discussions tend to break on party lines on the slightest provocation, and there is no real co-operation. Neither party is willing to share the patronage of its departments, and both are zealous to keep to themselves the power of decision in important matters. I have had to ask Patel to discuss with me the Hindi-Urdu language controversy in which the All-India Radio has been involved for a long time. He was on the point of issuing a Press note announcing his decision, without consulting either me or his colleagues or even the Provinces which are to be affected by it. I have no doubt that if the Muslim League do not decide to come into the Constituent Assembly, and the chances of their coming in are not great, I shall be faced with a demand from the Congress for the removal of the Muslim League representatives from the Interim Government.

6. The A-ICC resolution was carried in the face of strong opposition from the right-wing and the left-wing, and caused the old guard of the Congress some apprehension. Sarat Chandra Bose has resigned from the Working Committee as a protest, and is toying with the idea of taking up the cause of the INA.

7. I have heard no more at present of Baldev Singh's proposal for the release of the convicted INA men, which the Commander-in-Chief is quite clear could not be tolerated; and that any further concessions to the INA will be most dangerous. I entirely agree. There is, however, a resolution on this subject due for discussion in the Central Assembly early next month, and it will therefore have to come up in Cabinet for a decision as to Government's policy in the debate....

7. Adverse Effects of League's Non-cooperation

Record of Arthur Henderson's Conversation with Vallabhbhai Patel, 16 January 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 504-5.

TOP SECRET

He began by tracing the various developments that led up to the formation of the present Interim Government. He stated that the Muslim League had made it evident, both before and subsequent to their entering the Interim Government, that they were quite [?not] prepared to co-operate on the basis of Cabinet responsibility. This was having a most adverse effect upon the machinery of Government; indeed it could be said that in effect there was no government at all at the Centre. He did not know how long this could continue, especially as there were so many problems which had to be dealt with and on which Provincial Governments required guidance from the Centre. He was under very strong pressure from the Left Wing of the Congress, who were holding the Interim Government responsible for the failure to pursue an active policy on all these matters. He was doubtful if this could continue indefinitely. He thought it essential that the Muslim League should be fairly faced up with the need to co-operate with

their Congress colleagues in dealing with these immediate problems. He and his Congress colleagues were fully prepared to accept responsibility in proper conditions. He thought also that now that the Congress had passed their resolution in the face of considerable opposition from many of their supporters, that Jinnah should reciprocate, and suggested that he should be told that membership of the Executive Council must be accompanied by entry into the Constituent Assembly. He was not optimistic even if Jinnah did enter the Constituent Assembly, but was prepared to await developments.

With regard to the States, he expressed dissatisfaction with the present position. He alleged that the negotiating committee to represent the Princes was being arranged in the Political Department and at their diktat, in association, of course, with the Nawab of Bhopal. He stated that he had evidence that this was causing even dissatisfaction amongst the Princes. He also referred to the fact that there were very few representative bodies in the States, but had little to say in reply when I pointed out that time would hardly permit of reforms in this direction in view of the fact that the work of the Constituent Assembly had already begun. He was critical, however, of what he called the interference of the Political Department, and expressed the hope that steps would be taken to prevent them interfering.

8. Muslim League Unwilling to Enter Constituent Assembly

Letter from Sudhir Ghosh to Stafford Cripps, 19 January 1947

Sudhir Ghosh Papers, Correspondence with Sir Stafford Cripps, NMML.

9 Windsor Place, New Delhi

My dear Sir Stafford,

I write this letter to make a suggestion to you and I hope that you may feel able to do something about it.

As you know, the Congress people decided to postpone discussion of the main business of the preliminary session of the Constituent Assembly till the 20th January because they wanted the Muslim League to take their full share in these discussions. They called the AICC and accepted the British interpretation of the 16 May State Paper. I know many people in England will say that it is qualified acceptance. The little qualification in the Congress resolution was a repetition of the British declaration of 6 December that they do not contemplate forcing upon any unwilling part of the country a constitution it does not agree to. So far as the fundamental point of grouping is concerned the Congress have definitely accepted the British interpretation. The Cabinet Mission made a declaration that they would get together a Government representative of those who accepted the British plan of constitution making as set out in the 16 May statement. The Congress accepted the plan (presumably the British Government agreed that they had accepted it in its entirety when they were asked to form a Government) and they came into the Government. The Muslim League too, according to the Viceroy, accepted the plan and came into the Government. After having got into the Government they said they never accepted the 16 May statement. The Viceroy and HMG were then faced with the unpleasant necessity of having to ask the Muslim League either to accept the plan or to go out of the government. We realize that HMG did not feel able to do this because they felt that there was something in Mr Jinnah's grievance that he was not satisfied about the Congress attitude towards the fundamental point about the grouping of provinces. Now that that point has been settled Mr Jinnah cannot possibly produce any excuse for not making a decision as to whether or not he

accepts the 16 May plan. He could easily have called his Working Committee and Council and made a decision before the meeting of the Constituent Assembly tomorrow. But it is obvious that he has deliberately postponed a decision until after the Constituent Assembly session. This is not sheer cussedness; there is a well thought out purpose behind it. Mr Jinnah's plan evidently is not to participate in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly of India as a whole; he wants to wait till the Assembly divides itself into Sections and then he will enter into B and C Sections and treat them as independent Constituent Assemblies and will proceed to frame constitutions for the North-west and North-east of India. When those constitutions are made he would probably be willing to enter into negotiations with the Constituent Assembly of India about the formation of an Indian Union. He wants to destroy Provincial autonomy and he also wants the Centre to be very weak and not in a position to exercise any real authority over India as a whole. He therefore will not participate in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly as a whole. The Only way to get him into the Constituent Assembly is for you to tell him that the Muslim League must accept the 16 May statement, as amended and interpreted now, and take part in constitution making immediately; if they want long time to consider this matter and make a decision there is no objection to it, but in that case they must withdraw their five men from the government and they can return to the Government if and when the Muslim League accept the condition precedent to entering into the Government.

I feel that if you will discuss this point with the Secretary of State he will see the justice of this suggestion and apart from seeing the justice of it he may agree that such a step would bring the Muslims (who are most anxious to remain in the Government) into the Constituent Assembly of India.

I am sending this letter to you through Mr Henderson. I hope you will write a line to say that you got the letter and considered this suggestion.

I send my love to Lady Cripps and to yourself.

Sudhir

9. Matters of Appointments and Budget

Extracts from Wavell's Record of Interview with Liaquat Ali Khan, 27 January 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 563-5.

Secret

1. He leaves for the meeting at Karachi tomorrow, expects to be back on the 31st.
2. I spoke to him about the importance of the Muslim League coming into the Constituent Assembly on the lines of DPSV's brief, pointing out that the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee was sufficient to enable the Muslim League to join, and that it was as good as could be expected in the circumstances....
4. I mentioned the matter of the appointment of Judges to the Allahabad High Court. He said that these appointments should not be made on political grounds, and intimated that the recent one of Sapru had been a political appointment.
5. He agreed with my proposals about the Budget, but asked whether he should put his proposals to me first and then subsequently to the others. I said that I would leave it to him but that possibly he might first discuss them with me and then we could have a discussion together with the others. He said that it must be clear to Nehru that he must not consult other members of his party.

6. We then had a long argument on the proposed Cabinet Committees on Appointments. Liaquat continued to indicate his dislike of the proposed procedure. His chief point really was that the League had hoped to get away with certain appointments abroad on the recommendation of the Commerce Member, without going to Cabinet, in the same way as Nehru had managed to secure the appointments of Asaf Ali and Menon. I pointed out the constitutional position, that is, that the appointments were made by the Governor-General-in-Council and not in his own discretion; and that though I had previously always made the appointments in consultation with the Member concerned, I had always mentioned them in the Council, and that it would have been open to members of the Council to challenge my decision and require it to be taken in Council. I admitted that I had been 'bounced' over the appointment of Asaf Ali. Liaquat's chief fear seemed to be that nationalist Muslims would be appointed, who would voice abroad the Congress point of view but would be regarded as representing the Muslims.
7. He then raised the point whether Hussein Imam could attend the forthcoming meeting of the Working Committee at Karachi. I said that as his appointment to be President of Council of State had not yet been announced, this did not seem to be objectionable.

W.

10. Cabinet Committees to Decide upon Higher Appointments

Extracts from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Wavell, 31 January 1947
SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 476–9.

New Delhi

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have been giving careful consideration to the proposal that Cabinet committees might be appointed to consider and decide upon higher appointments in India as well as abroad. I have consulted some of my colleagues also on this subject...

3. Our general policy has to be laid down by the Cabinet as a whole and we have already stated in our instruments of instructions to some of our representatives abroad that they must steer clear of any party or communal lines. It would be exceedingly unfortunate if any of our representatives functioned abroad as communal propagandists. Of course the persons selected may and often will belong to particular parties. But they must be such as can rise above the party level and function as national representatives.

4. Thus far the External Affairs Department and the Commonwealth Relations Department have appointed four persons to relatively important posts abroad. The latest appointment is that of a senior member of the Foreign Service, Mr K.P.S. Menon, who is going to China as our Ambassador. The other three are, as it so happens, all Muslims—Mr Asaf Ali, Ambassador in Washington; Dr Rauf as our Representative in Rangoon; and Mr [M.R.A.] Baig as our Consul in Goa. In choosing these three persons I did not think at all as to whether they were Hindus or Muslims, but tried to find the fittest man for the place. It so happened that the three persons chosen were all Muslims, one of them being a colleague of ours in the Cabinet and the two others being persons unconnected with any party or political activity. Some criticism was made

about my appointments, to the effect that I was choosing Muslims only and neglecting Hindus and others. I did not pay much attention to this criticism because I was satisfied that on merits the choice was good. But, of course, I cannot ignore, in existing circumstances, the fact that a certain balance has to be aimed at.

5. It seems to me that it will be [particularly] unfortunate if names are discussed in committees or in the Cabinet. This would be undesirable in the case of servicemen and it would be much more so in the case of men or women who are non-officials and who have been connected with the public life of the country. The initiative for an appointment in any of our departments should come from the department itself. If any person is thrust on a department against the wishes of that department, this will inevitably lead to a lack of co-operation and possibly to some conflict.

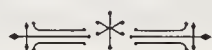
6. In my letter of 23 January I suggested that there should be further elucidation of the proposal you have made. There appeared to me to be a difference in your proposal and that put forward by Sardar Patel. Sardar Patel's idea was that the Appointments Committee should have in effect final authority to make a decision. Your proposal refers to a committee to advise you on appointments. If it is a question of advice and recommendation, there is no reason whatever why there should be a committee. The only point of having a committee is to give it authority to appoint. The committee would in effect function on behalf of the Cabinet and approval by you would be purely formal. This point has to be made clear. While I dislike very much the idea of appointments committees to be set up and thus starting a practice which is unknown in other countries and which may well lead to complications, I realize that in the abnormal conditions prevailing at present some way out has to be found. Perhaps the formation of such committees would be the lesser evil. I cannot say definitely now as there is a lack of the spirit of co-operation amongst the Members of the Cabinet and far too great a desire to emphasize purely communal issues and appointments based on communal considerations. With this background it is not unlikely that some persons so appointed might function far more as representatives of a communal party than of the nation and government as a whole. This danger has to be avoided. Any arrangement now would have to be temporary and experimental so that we may know exactly whether it works satisfactorily or not. In case it does not prove satisfactory, it will have to be put an end to.

7. Keeping all these considerations in view, I am prepared to accept the principle of having Cabinet committees for appointments, both for service in India and abroad. But it should be clearly understood that these committees are not merely recommendatory and advisory. They must decide finally. In the case of important appointments, if there is any dispute, the matter might be referred to the Cabinet itself. The initiative for proposing any name or names should come from the department concerned.

8. This arrangement would be provisional and might be reviewed later.

9. If this principle is agreed to and accepted, the question of names for the committee can be considered later.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru



11. Nehru Responds to League's Resolution at Karachi

Telegram from Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 1 February 1947
IOR, R/3/1/120, Acc. No. 3438, NAI.

MOST IMMEDIATE

SECRET

NEW DELHI

No. 203-S. I saw Nehru for half an hour this evening. I told him how much I regretted the League decision which seemed to leave no loophole. A final breach between Congress and League would have serious effects on the country. There could be no question of HMG dissolving the Constituent Assembly or reversing their policy but obviously a Constituent Assembly without the League and possibly without the States could not make an acceptable Constitution for India as a whole.

2. As to the Central Government I said that Congress were in position to demand the resignation of the Muslim League members, but whether we should be able to carry on the administration of the country more effectively with the League in active opposition than with them in the Government was a matter for careful consideration. The crisis had come at an awkward time with the budget session of the Assembly just beginning. I asked Nehru whether he had had time to consider the matter with his colleagues and had any views to put forward.

3. Nehru said that the work of the Constituent Assembly would go on but that obviously they could not force a constitution on a reluctant Province. He thought that they would probably draw up a model outline Constitution for a Province and then send it round to Provinces for discussion by the Provincial Assembly. They would discuss with States Negotiating Committee on 8th February and see how far the States were prepared to cooperate with the Constituent Assembly. The meetings of the various Committees had been postponed till the end of February in the hope of Muslim League and States joining.

4. As to the Cabinet, the matter required careful consideration. It was not merely that the League had to join the Constituent Assembly, but that until the Bombay resolution was withdrawn they were committed to a policy of direct action, that is, of active opposition to the Government of which they at present formed part.

5. Nehru was subdued and seemed to realize the difficulties and dangers of the position and the need for careful consideration. I asked him to let me have his considered views as early as possible.

6. I will see Liaquat as soon as he returns to Delhi.

7. Since this was written I have received your 1503. Full text of League resolution was telegraphed to you this morning.

12. Congress Faces 'Difficulties'

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to M.K. Gandhi, 1 February 1947
P.N. Chopra (Ed.), *Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, Vol. XII, p. 9.

New Delhi

REVERED BAPU,

Received your letter dated 24th.

League is now on warpath. Let us see what happens. It appears that kings are not going to behave well. Here many a times your advice is needed, but what can be done? We are doing what we think proper, but difficulties are mounting.

Food and cloths are in scarcity. Communists and League people are creating difficulties, and socialists also have joined them in making things difficult. It won't be surprising if Sarad babu also chooses to go on a wrong way. Difficulties are mounting from all sides, and we are pulling on.

May God save us.

Your health might be good.

VALLABHBHAI'S PRANAM

13. Muslim League and Congress Shy of Direct Communal Confrontation

Extract from a Letter from Wavell to Hugh Dow, 3 February 1947
IOR, R/3/1/130, Acc. No. 3448, NAI.

4. The Muslim League resolution at Karachi demanding the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly went much further than I had expected. If the Congress insist on the Muslim League representatives being dismissed from the Interim Government, it will be difficult for me to refuse, on the other hand they would probably be ill-advised to suggest it, and they do not seem yet to have made up their mind on the subject. I cannot tell you how the position is likely to develop. The only healthy sign at present is that both parties are fighting shy of direct stimulation of communal warfare. The utterances from Karachi about the Punjab situation have been more moderate than one might have expected. Whether Khizar will be able to maintain his position during the Budget session of the Punjab Assembly after the fracas with the Muslim League remains to be seen.

14. Congress Demands Resignation of Muslim League Members from the Interim Government

Letter from Congress Members of Interim Government to Wavell, 5 February 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 34-5.

Dear Lord Wavell,

In the interview Jawaharlal Nehru had with you last Saturday you discussed the resolution of the Muslim League Working Committee, passed the day before at Karachi. The situation that has been created by the decision of the Muslim League is a grave one and you suggested that we should acquaint you with our considered view in the matter.

2. We have given careful thought to this. We are clearly of opinion that as a consequence of the Muslim League decision it is no longer possible for Members of the Muslim League to continue in the Interim Government. For them to continue to do so would mean an abandonment of the Cabinet Delegation's Scheme of 16 May, 1946.

3. You will remember that prior to the inclusion of the nominees of the Muslim League in the Interim Government we had repeatedly laid emphasis on the necessity of their accepting the long-term plan of the Cabinet Mission. You told us that this was a prerequisite to their joining the Government.

4. Immediately after entering the Government our colleagues of the Muslim League made it clear that they would not join the Constituent Assembly and that they did not consider the Interim Government as a Cabinet or even as a Coalition. In spite of these difficulties, however,

we have continued to function, though rather precariously, in the hope that the Muslim League would after some time accept the full Scheme and enter the Constituent Assembly.

5. This hope has now finally gone and we have to face an open defiance of the whole Cabinet Mission's Scheme, and indeed the demand is for a scrapping of the Scheme. The resolution of the Muslim League, which has now been reaffirmed, is not merely for non-participation in the Constituent Assembly but for a total rejection of the Scheme and for a programme of direct action.

6. It seems impossible to us that this policy and programme can proceed side by side with membership of the Interim Government. The two are incompatible. If the Cabinet Mission's Scheme is to be worked out, as we think it must be, then those who reject it cannot continue as Members of the Interim Government. There is no other alternative.

7. Any changes in the Interim Government at this stage, and during the Budget Session of the Central Assembly, may lead to administrative and other difficulties. We are convinced, however, that to attempt to avoid or delay these changes would result in far graver and more harmful consequences.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru
A.K. Azad
Vallabhbhai Patel
Rajendra Prasad
C. Rajagopalachari
Jagjivan Ram
John Matthai
Baldev Singh
C.H. Bhabha

15. League's Stance on Interim Government and Cabinet Mission Plan

Letter from Liaquat Ali Khan to Wavell, 8 February 1947.

PRO, CAB 134/344, Acc. No. 4042, NAI.

With reference to my interview with you on Thursday when you informed me that the 9 non-League members of the Executive Council had written to you asking that five of us who represent the Muslim League in the Government should resign because the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League by its Karachi resolution had declined to convene a meeting of the All-India League Council for the purpose of rescinding its Bombay resolution of 29 July whereby the earlier acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's plan was withdrawn. I consider it necessary to place on record the reactions of my other four colleagues of the Muslim League bloc and myself.

You will recall that immediately after the publication of the Cabinet Mission's Statement of 16 May the Congress put forward certain interpretations of their own particularly with regard to paragraphs 15, 19 (V) and 19 (VIII) of that Statement, which interpretations were *prima facie* untenable and inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the Cabinet Mission's Statement. The Cabinet Mission who were then in this country took cognizance of these misinterpretations put by the Congress on fundamental points of principle and procedure, and within nine days of the publication of their first Statement they issued another Statement on 25 May in which

they made it quite clear that the interpretations which the Congress had put forward did not accord with the intentions of the Cabinet Mission.

It was in view of these specific provisions in the Cabinet Mission's Plan regarding Groups and Sections as clarified and interpreted by the Cabinet Mission on the 25th of May and the belief that the Plan will be worked out in letter and spirit by all the Parties with goodwill and sincerity that the Council of the All-India Muslim League decided to accept that Plan by its resolution of 6 June. The Congress Working Committee however passed a resolution on 25 June in which it still adhered to its own interpretations and professed to 'accept' the Statement of 16 May subject to its right to proceed on the basis of these wrong interpretations. The same wrong interpretations were repeated by Congress leaders in their speeches at the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay in the first week of July, 1946, and thereafter innumerable statements were made by them which proved that the so-called acceptance of the Statement of 16 May by the Congress was no acceptance of all.

By this time the Muslim League was convinced that the Congress was pursuing a dishonest course and that it was determined to use its brute majority in the Constituent Assembly to alter the Cabinet Mission's Plan according to its own interpretation and not implement it on the basis laid down by the Cabinet Mission themselves and clarified by them in their Statement of 25 May. Accordingly Mr Jinnah and myself issued public statements drawing the attention of His Majesty's Government to continued Congress insistence on misinterpreting fundamental provisions of the State Paper to their own advantage and we asked HMG to take cognizance of these Congress declarations and to set matters right. Shortly afterwards a debate on India was held in both Houses of Parliament but in course of their speeches in the House of Lords and in the House of Commons respectively Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Sir Stafford Cripps, far from giving any assurance and making any declaration that they would prevent Congress from acting contrary to the correct interpretation of the State Paper as given by the Cabinet Mission themselves and as accepted by the Muslim League, on the contrary, made statements which encouraged the Congress in thinking that the British Government were powerless to intervene and that the Congress could twist and distort the Statement of 16 May to suit its own purpose.

Accordingly, the Council of the All-India Muslim League when it met at Bombay on 27-29 July last year had no alternative but to withdraw its acceptance and to decline to come into Constituent Assembly where not the agreed plan of 16 May but a plan basically different from it was going to be pursued by the sheer weight of Hindu majority.

That this view of the Muslim League was correct and its decision of 29 July was justified was proved beyond any shadow of doubt during the London discussions in the first week of December when the Prime Minister and the members of the Cabinet Mission were brought face to face with realities and had to issue their Statement of 6 December in which they admitted that while the Muslim League's interpretation accorded with their own, the Congress had put forward a different view, and they urged the Congress to accept the correct interpretation or refer the matter to the Federal Court.

You will also recall that both Mr Jinnah and myself in our discussions with the Cabinet Mission and yourself in London urged the necessity of providing for some sort of an umpire for the settlement of disputes on other questions of interpretation which might arise from time to time in the course of the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly and the Sections. The Cabinet Mission and you recognized the necessity for such a provision and accordingly the Statement of 6 December contained the following paragraph:

It is, however, feared that other questions of interpretation of the Statement of 16 May may arise and His Majesty's Government hope that if the Council of the Muslim League are able to agree to participate, they will also agree, as has the Congress, that the Federal Court should be asked to decide matters of interpretation that may be referred to them by either side and will accept such a decision, so that the procedure, both in the Union Constituent Assembly and in the Sections, may accord with the Cabinet Mission Plan.

I would now like to draw your attention to the subsequent decisions of the Congress and statements by some of the foremost Congress leaders, notably Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, with regard to (1) the correct interpretation of paragraphs 19 (V) and 19 (VIII) of the 16 May Statement, and (2) the provision that other questions of interpretation shall be referred to the Federal Court.

By its resolution of 22 December the Congress Working Committee declined to refer the question of interpretation of what HMG's 6 December Statement described as the fundamental point, to the Federal Court, and the Working Committee decided to summon the All-India Congress Committee for the purpose of considering the matter. The AICC thereafter passed a resolution purporting to agree to advise action in accordance with the interpretation of the British Government in regard to the procedure to be followed in Sections but at the same time laying down such conditions, reservation and qualifications which totally nullify the effect of the advice. In the view of the Muslim League this resolution of the Congress is in no way different in effect from the Congress resolution of 25 June, rather it makes the position worse in so far as it confers a right of veto not only on a Province but also on a part of a Province and the Sikhs. The Muslim League is convinced, as must be any honest and impartial person, that the Congress has not accepted the Cabinet Mission's Statement of 16 May as interpreted by their Statement of 25 May and as further interpreted by His Majesty's Government's Statement of 6 December. The resolutions passed, the rules framed and certain decisions taken so far by the so-called Constituent Assembly prove that the Congress has already violated some of the fundamentals of the Cabinet Mission's Plan. It clearly indicates that Congress had never intended nor does it intend to abide by the terms of the Mission's Plan.

With regard to reference of other questions of interpretation to the Federal Court, no mention was made in the resolution of the Congress but Pandit Nehru, in course of his speech at the AICC on 6 January made it quite clear that Congress definitely and categorically rejects the procedure laid down in the 6 December Statement and declared that it for the Constituent Assembly alone to give interpretation of the State Paper of 16 May.

Following these decisions by the Congress Working Committee and the AICC there was considerable controversy as to whether Congress had really accepted the 6 December Statement or not. Accordingly, several days before the Working Committee of the Muslim League was due to meet at Karachi, I issued a statement to the Press putting the following categorical questions and suggested that on behalf of the Congress clear-cut answers to these questions might be given through the public Press to resolve doubts:

- (1) Does the Congress agree that the Sections sitting as a whole and by simple majority vote shall decide whether there are to be Groups and also settle the Group Constitutions?
- (2) Does the Congress accept that the Constitutions of the provinces shall be settled by the Sections concerned sitting as a whole and taking decisions by simple majority votes?

- (3) Does the Congress agree that Section (C) will settle the Constitution for the Province of Assam by simple majority votes, that a new Legislature for the Province of Assam shall be elected according to the Constitution so settled, and that Assam will exercise its rights of remaining in the Group or opting out by a vote of that new Legislature?
- (4) Does Congress recognize the right of Section (B) to settle the Constitution of the NWF Province by a simple majority vote of the Section as a whole and that a new legislature for the NWF Province shall be elected under the Constitution so settled this new legislature alone being competent to decide whether the province is to remain in Group (B) or opt out?
- (5) Does Congress agree that Section (B) sitting as a whole and by simple majority vote shall settle the Constitution for the Punjab and the Group Constitution, if there is any, effecting all communities concerned, including the Sikhs and that such a Constitution for the Punjab and for the Group shall be final subject to the approval of parliament in terms laid down by the Cabinet Mission in their Statement of 25 May regarding safeguards for minorities and that the Sikhs as a community shall have no right of veto?
- (6) Does the Congress agree that either side shall have the right to refer other questions of interpretation to the Federal Court and that its decisions shall be accepted by both sides?

Although most of the top ranking Congress Leaders were then in Delhi, no reply was given on behalf of the Congress.

The position, therefore, is that while the Muslim League originally accepted the Cabinet Mission's Statement of 16 May in letter and in spirit and in its correct interpretation but was subsequently compelled to withdraw its acceptance, Congress at no time accepted that Statement and does not now accept it. It is clear from HMG's Statement of 6 December that up to that time the Congress had not accepted some of the essentials and fundamentals of the Cabinet Mission's Plan. They urged the Congress to accept the re-affirmation of the intentions of the Cabinet Mission with regard to those fundamental points. The Congress has not only not done so by its resolution of 6 January 1947, but on the contrary has made the matter worse by going back on the agreement to accept the decision of the Federal Court on other questions of interpretation of the Statement of 16 May. The question of reconsideration by the Muslim League of its July resolution does not arise so long as the Congress does not unequivocally accept HMG's Statement of 6 December, 1946

In the result, therefore, if the basis of the participation in the Interim Government were acceptance of the Statement of 16 May, then the Congress which has not accepted it and the Sikhs who have definitely rejected it have no greater right to have their representatives or nominees in the Government than the Muslim League has.

In the circumstances it is extremely presumptuous on the part of the 9 non-League members of the Executive Council to demand that their Muslim League Colleagues should resign.

I am herewith enclosing a copy of the Karachi resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Muslim League which deals with the matter in greater detail and which may be regarded as a part of this communication. I hope you will be good enough to convey to HMG the text of this letter and the enclosed resolution so that they may have full material before them to understand the real position.

16. Possibility of League Coming into Constituent Assembly

Telegram from Pethick-Lawrence to Wavell, 8 February 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 646-7.

TOP SECRET

My colleagues and I have considered further your telegrams 219-S and 220-S of 4th February and also your telegram 228-S, 229-S and 235-S.

2. While we recognize that Congress agreed to Muslim League entering Interim Government on the basis that League would reconsider their Bombay resolution and that you gave assurances to Nehru in your letter of 23rd October to that effect, we feel strongly that we should not take precipitate action on the request to remove League members from Government. If you are pressed for an answer you should say that you referred their letter at once to HMG who must have reasonable time to consider such an important matter. We think that what Liaquat said to you reported in your 235-S may mean that there is still a faint possibility of League coming into Constituent Assembly but position may be clear on receipt of his letter.

3. We feel that before we give our reply to letter in your telegram 229-S we should issue Statement drafted while you were here revised text of which was brought out to you by Abell. We should propose to do so in Parliament at a very early date. We think that this announcement may have considerable effect on situation. After it has been made we should reply to request for removal of League from the Government by saying that we wish to give time for the parties to consider this Statement before we take a decision.

4. We shall telegraph to you separately some minor amendments to wording of Draft Statement. We have, however, reconsidered wording of paragraph 10 and now propose that it should read as follows in order to avoid possible controversy as to the position under this paragraph read with the last paragraph of our Statement of 6th December. As it is now drafted Congress might claim that constitution had been worked out in accordance with proposals made by Cabinet Mission even though Muslim League and possibly the States had not been represented in Constituent Assembly. Revised text Begins. 'After months of hard work by the Cabinet Mission a great measure of agreement was obtained as to the method by which a constitution should be worked out. This was embodied in their statements of May last. HMG there agreed to recommend to Parliament a constitution worked out, in accordance with the proposals made therein, by a fully representative Constituent Assembly. But if such a constitution has not been worked out by a fully representative Assembly before the time mentioned in paragraph 7 of this Statement His Majesty's Government will have to consider etc.' (as in present Text). Ends.

5. We are opposed to making Statement on lines proposed in your 220-S. Although Congress may be said to have accepted Mission's proposals to greater extent than Muslim League, we certainly do not think we should commit ourselves publicly at the present moment to position that we regard Congress as having unequivocally accepted proposals of Mission.

For your own information there are parts of Congress Resolution that certainly require clarification.



17. Nehru's Plea to Gandhi to Return to Delhi

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to M.K. Gandhi, 10 February 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, p. 36.

New Delhi

Dear Bapu,

This morning I sent you a letter by post. But as Sudhir is going I am sending this note with him.

I have received your letter on February 6th.

I cannot venture to criticize your decision to stay on in East Bengal. But I have an overwhelming feeling that vital decisions are being made and will be made in Delhi, affecting the whole of our future as well as of course the present, and your presence at such a moment is necessary. We are drifting everywhere and sometimes I doubt if we are drifting in the right direction. We live in a state of perpetual crisis and have no real grip of the situation.

As you know, we have informed the Viceroy that in view of the Muslim League resolution passed at Karachi, the League Members cannot continue in the Government. There is really no answer to our charge and demand and the Viceroy realizes it. He is awaiting instructions from London. Whatever these may be, our troubles will no doubt continue. What I am worried most about is the rapidly deteriorating economic and labour situation. Also the state of the Congress organization. Those of us who are in Government have given and can give no time at all to Congress work. We are losing touch with our people. I have been unable to go even to Allahabad for a day for months.

The question of the Princes and States entering the Constituent Assembly worked out ultimately a little better than we expected. But of course there are still many hurdles ahead.

Love,

Yours,
 Jawaharlal

18. 'Congress Patience Exhausted: League Must Be In or Out'

The Hindustan Times, 13 February 1947.

New Delhi, Wednesday—While every sympathy is felt for the British Government battling with the coal crisis, Congress quarters here strongly feel that Britain must without delay break her silence over the League's Karachi resolution. It is said that there is no scope for further negotiations and indeed that the patience of the Congress and the minorities has been exhausted.

The suggestion emanating from London in favour of another mission by a Cabinet Minister has therefore, caused resentment. The issue is now clear-cut and the British Government must face it squarely. By its Karachi resolution the Muslim League has unequivocally rejected the Cabinet Mission's plan. On the other hand, the Congress and the minorities have accepted it. Since the British Government wish the transfer of power to be peaceful, it is for them to demand of the League either to join the Constituent Assembly or to quit the Interim Government. Should the British Government not do so or attempt to evade the issue, a grave crisis will be precipitated.

The present state of affairs is not conducive to efficient administration or to the planning and execution of the social and economic measures so vital to the well-being of the nation. The Interim Government must either govern as a united team or be purged of the discordant element. The continuous and unreasoning opposition of the League Party in the Central Assembly to the Government calls for early action.

19. 'Impropriety of Muslim League Members'

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Wavell, 14 February 1947
SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 6-8.

Dear Lord Wavell,

You will recall that some time ago I wrote to you regarding the impropriety of Muslim League Members of the Central Government issuing public statements criticizing the conduct of the Punjab Government in grossly disparaging terms. You then replied to me that you had spoken to the Finance Member about it. I expected that things would improve, but instead I notice in today's *Dawn* that the Finance Member himself has issued a statement which not only offends in the above-mentioned respect, but seeks to draw, from the happenings in the Punjab, a portent of what might be achieved on an all-India scale. Things have been made worse by a clear hint that matters might take a violent turn.

2. I also enclose a cutting from the *Free Press Journal* (dated 7-2-'47) of Mr Ghazanfar Ali Khan's speech at Lahore. I would particularly invite attention to the following passage:

Mohammed Bin Kassim and Mahmud of Ghazni invaded India with armies composed of only a few thousands, and yet were able to overpower lakhs of Hindus; God willing, a few lakhs of Muslims will yet overwhelm crores of Hindus.

The parallel drawn is significant, particularly in regard to Ghazni's invasion, which consisted of repeated raids on India in which Hindus were killed in thousands and temples were destroyed.

3. I am sure you will not regard with equanimity such utterances of your two colleagues of the Cabinet. A more flagrant breach of the rules of responsibility incumbent on Members of the Central Government would be difficult to find. Instances like this only serve to strengthen our conviction that a corporate body like the Central Government has ceased to exist and that the sooner the present state of affairs is put an end to, the better.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Viscount Wavell

ENCLOSURE

Lahore (By Mail)

'Mohammed Bin Kassim and Mahmud of Ghazni invaded India with armies composed of only a few thousands, and yet were able to overpower lakhs of Hindus; God willing, a few lakhs of Muslims will yet overwhelm crores of Hindus,' said Mr Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Health Member, Interim Government, speaking at a meeting at Idgah Maidan on Saturday last.

He added, the Muslims would achieve Pakistan and also bring liberation to the Hindus who had been slaves for several decades.

Mr Liaquat Ali Khan also attended the meeting.

Referring to the Punjab situation, Mr Ghazanfar Ali Khan declared that the Punjab League movement was not directed against any particular community, but was launched to regain civil liberties which had been suppressed by the Unionist Government in order to crush its opponent, the Muslim League. He also attacked the Sikh community, which, he said, was always exploited by the British, the Hindus and the Congress by turns.

Referring to the Constituent Assembly, he said the League had been the first to accept the Cabinet Mission's Plan and extend its hand of co-operation to the Congress, but the latter failed to appreciate the League's action. It was scandalous to call the present Assembly at Delhi a Constituent Assembly, he said; it was purely a Hindu-dominated body, and its proceedings would not be binding on all.

He would not advise the Muslims to win their rights by means of civil war, but he said they should be prepared for all eventualities.

Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, addressing the meeting earlier, said that the problems of India could not be solved unless the claims of the Muslims for Pakistan were conceded.

Referring to the resolution passed by the Working Committee reiterating its decision not to participate in the Constituent Assembly, Mr Liaquat Ali Khan said that if the Assembly work was carried through irrespective of whether the League co-operated or not, the Constituent Assembly decisions would meet with the fate of the former Motilal Nehru Report [on constitutional reforms].

The Finance Member accused the Congress of avoiding an honourable settlement with the League. The Congress, he said, was out to achieve Akhand Hindustan, by a revolution if necessary. The revolution would sweep away the Muslims of India unless they stood united and were prepared for all contingencies.

He advised the Muslims in the country to follow strictly the tenets of Koran which did not permit aggression against the weak.

Speaking about the problems of Sindh itself, both the League members of the Interim Government stressed that it should be the primary aim of the League Ministry to educate the masses and work for their economic betterment.

Besides attacking the Constituent Assembly, the League leaders also condemned the Congress ministry in India for failing to protect the interests of the Muslim minorities. The recent Bihar happenings were recalled in this connection.

20. 'Major Tasks before the Interim Government'

Extract from a Note by Rajendra Prasad Forwarded to Jawaharlal Nehru, 18 February 1947

Valmiki Chaudhary (Ed.), *Dr Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence & Select Documents*, Vol. VII, pp. 23-7.

The major tasks, which await immediate solution at the hands of the Interim Government are:

To proceed with utmost expedition to frame (a) a pattern of a Provincial Constitution, and (b) a pattern of the all-India Union Constitution which will provide all the legitimate safeguards for the minorities, be in accordance with the popular aspirations and be acceptable to the largest number of Provinces and parts of Provinces which will have to be partitioned as

separate units; and to get these constitutions accepted by a unanimous vote of the Provincial Legislatures concerned;

(2) To formulate a sound and a firm economic policy for the transition period designed to maximise production of essential consumer goods with increasing efficiency and lower costs and not only to hold the worsening inflationary situation but to bring down the price-cost level to reasonable levels with a view to affording relief to the man in the street; and

(3) To strengthen and to adapt the existing administrative machinery so that it will be capable of discharging efficiently the positive tasks which the Government are undertaking and also be in a position to meet the heavy calls which will be made upon it after June 1948.

2. The importance of No. (1) and No. (2) tasks are fully realized by the public and by the politicians although the efforts made to secure these tasks are yet too feeble. The vital importance of the strength and the efficiency of the administrative machinery to the real policies and the purposes of Government has not, however, received the consideration that it deserves. The administrative machinery designed under British rule was, in the main, intended to perform efficiently the negative functions of Government of maintaining law and order internally and externally, and, for that purpose, a comparatively small machinery with very rigid and sound administrative traditions had been built up. The nature of Government is rapidly changing. From the conception of a police state, Government is rapidly becoming a public-service-corporation state and, as in the United Kingdom, so in India, Government have found it necessary to augment the bureaucratic machinery to discharge the positive functions in the field of agriculture and general economic development. The administrative machinery of the future must not only be sufficient to carry out with firmness and efficiency the elementary, yet vital, task of maintaining law and order and public security, but, it must also be geared up to the task of carrying out the positive functions which Government are undertaking. The seriousness of the administrative problem and the vital importance of solving the administrative problem within the shortest possible time would be realized if the present facts of the situation are taken into account.

3. The administrative machinery under British rule was a comparatively small one. The normal cadre of the ICS in many Provinces is inadequate in relation to requirements and it is true to say that many large areas such as Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Orissa, are under-administered. This administrative machinery was intended, as mentioned before, to maintain law and order and to collect revenue. As a result of the additional tasks such as food control, cloth control, agriculture and industrial development undertaken by the Government during the war and the post-war years, even the normal cadres in Provinces have been greatly depleted by the demands of the Central Government and the Provincial Secretariats for senior civil servants with the result that the district administration, which has to bear the brunt of the burden of Government's essential functions such as law and order or development, has greatly suffered in strength and it is found difficult to get senior men of the right type for discharging these vital functions. Apart from this, it is clear as daylight that a further inroad will be made upon the depleted administrative strength with the disappearance of the non-Indian element from the superior services. The problem of administrative machinery and its strength must be viewed in the perspective that, from June 1948 onwards, India will be free not only from foreign domination but free from the foreign element in all the branches of its services. At the same time, for the next two years, India will be passing through the birth pangs of the new era of freedom which is taking shape. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that efforts should be made without the least possible delay to strengthen the administrative machinery and to place

it in a position in which all the calls that might be made upon it in the sphere of law and order, food control, agriculture and industrial development, relief and rehabilitation, will and could be discharged with efficiency and speed. In the ultimate analysis, the contents of freedom and the purposes of the state are translated to the common man and woman in the factory or the field by the actions, the activities, the vigour and the character of the district administrator who is the symbol of Government's authority to them. Attention, therefore, must be concentrated on strengthening the district administration, both in its law and order and in its development aspect and experienced men must be found to man the district administration so that it could cope with the tasks that will confront it in the next two years.

4. What are the steps which the Interim Government have taken to ensure that the administrative machinery will not only not break down but will be strong, adequate and efficient to deal with every emergency situation that might arise after June 1948, so that Government could perform its elementary duty of governing? So far as is known, the only steps that have been taken are the constitution of the new administrative services from the war service candidates. Having regard to the stake involved in the situation, it is ever so essential that no time should be lost in strengthening the administrative machinery during the next 14 months by (i) supplementary measures to augment the administrative machinery and (ii) by enunciating and firmly implementing a policy designed to maintain sound, healthy and proper administrative traditions. As regards the first, it would be worthwhile drawing attention to an important source which does not appear to have been taken into account by Government. It is appreciated that for the Heads of the district administration, civil servants with experience of district work must be found. Similarly, it is appreciated that for senior posts in the secretariat of a Government, civil servants with experience of district work also should be found....

5. Apart from the question of strengthening the administrative machinery, the problem of maintaining and improving sound administrative traditions is of equal importance. It is realized that the district administrator of today is not the ruler of the people but is essentially a servant of the people carrying out the orders of Government who themselves are the first servants of the people. While this basic fact has to be recognized, there is a general complaint that under the responsible Governments now working in Provinces there is too much interference with the discretion of individual administrative officer from the Ministers, which not only lowers the prestige of the officer but also greatly weakens the efficiency of the administration. There can be no doubt that the Ministry is responsible for laying down the policy. There can be no doubt that the Ministry must supervise the actions of the public servants with a view to ensuring that the policy is being carried out according to its spirit. But, it is essential, if the fair name, the efficiency and the integrity of the popular Governments is to be maintained, that (a) intelligible, fair and impartial procedure should be followed in regard to the making of all appointments, and (b) once a policy is agreed upon, the public servants who are expected to carry it out should have the assurance that Government will fully support them in carrying out that policy and they would not be victimized to please the political supporters of the Ministry....

6. Stories of weakening of the administration, depletion of cadres, interference, corruption and inefficiency are a common tale in a large number of Provinces in India today. This is a serious threat to the administrative efficiency and to the capacity of the Government to govern, to maintain law and order and public security and to carry out their objectives of development policy in the critical years to come. The problem of administrative strength, administrative efficiency and administrative traditions is on a par with the problem of constitution-making and of sound economic and developmental policies. This, however, has not received the attention

that it deserves and unless steps are taken to build up and strengthen adequate administrative machinery and traditions before June 1948, there is a danger that a vacuum might be created in which the very foundation of the state will be at peril.

Rajendra Prasad

21. Discussions regarding League's Position in Interim Government

Extract from the Record of Wavell's Interview with Jawaharlal Nehru, 21 February 1947

SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 38–41.

I spoke to Nehru...and emphasized the necessity of getting the Muslim League into the Constituent Assembly. I mentioned the points in the AICC resolution of 6th January which seemed to need some explanation if the Muslim League was to be persuaded to join the Constituent Assembly.

2. We then had a discussion on the points in the AICC resolution and in the Rules of Procedure referred to in Secretary of State's telegram. Nehru sought to justify them as not inconsistent with the Mission plan; and professed the desire of himself and his colleagues to get the Muslim League into the Constituent Assembly. He spoke of the possible partition of the Punjab and Bengal, if agreement was not reached. I emphasized to him especially the necessity to maintain the integrity of the Indian army, which might be affected if there was an open breach between the Congress and the League.

3. He described the statement of His Majesty's Government as a courageous document, which would have far-reaching effects. But he went on to speak of its lack of definition on many points, in paragraphs 10, 11 and 12. I explained to him the reason why His Majesty's Government could not at present be more definite and what was in their minds.

4. He then spoke of the Muslim League Members remaining in the Central Government. He said that it depended on (a) whether the Muslim League joined the Constituent Assembly, and (b) what the position of the Central Government would be during the interim period. He presumed from paragraph 11 of His Majesty's Government's statement that there would be progressive development of the powers of the central Government during the interim period. He said that the Congress would not press for an immediate answer to the request about the Muslim League remaining in the Central Government; but that the issue would have to be faced in the near future.

5. Nehru said that a meeting of the Congress Working Committee had been fixed for 5th March before the issue of His Majesty's Government's statement. He thought that there was no necessity to advance the date and that the statement could be considered by the Working Committee at that meeting.

Nehru was obviously impressed by the statement and conscious of the responsibility thrown on the Congress. The interview lasted for an hour.

Viceroy's recollection is that Nehru's argument was on lines that HMG has recognized that large bodies cannot be compelled into a constitution against their will, and that it was only logical that large minorities inside a province, for example, the Hindus in Bengal and the Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab could also not be compelled into an unacceptable constitution. There was some argument on the interpretation of 'parts of the country' in the last paragraph of the statement of 6th December. Nehru argued that 'parts of the country' could mean 'parts of a province.' Viceroy said that, that was certainly not the intention of HMG and did not override the original statement in which existing provinces were treated as a whole. Viceroy added

that if the statement of the AICC was merely meant to emphasize the obvious truth that any constitution, provincial, group or central, could only be formed with the consent of the great majority of the people, Congress should say so; but that if it implied that a part of a province could secede during the process of constitution making, this was entirely inconsistent with the acceptance of the Mission's plan. Viceroy added that it was up to the Congress to make their intentions clear to the League. Viceroy does not remember any definite arguments about the Rules of Procedure.

22. Viceroy Reflects on Political Situation in India

Extract from Wavell's Letter to King George VI, 24 February 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 801–9.

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE, NEW DELHI

Your Majesty,

This will be the last of the periodical letters I shall write Your Majesty as your Viceroy, since the change of your representative in India takes place almost at once. In it I will try to bring the political situation up to date, and to give a short summary of what I have attempted during the 3 ½ years that I have been Viceroy.

Since I saw Your Majesty during my visit to London last December, the political situation has hinged on the declaration made by Your Majesty's Government on 6th December. The statement itself was, I am sure, a valuable and salutary one; but it should in my view have been made many months earlier.

It came as something of a shock to the Congress that the Government should have at last decided to insist on its own interpretation of the Mission's plan of 16th May. It was soon obvious that the two factions inside the Congress were sharply divided about accepting or rejecting the new statement. Those actually within the Government—the Old Guard of the Congress—were generally for acceptance; while the Left Wing, led by such as Jai Prakash Narain and Sarat Chandra Bose, were for challenging Your Majesty's Government by a flat refusal to accept any interpretation of their intentions from them. That inveterate enemy of the British, old man Gandhi, from his village meanderings in East Bengal, where he rather reminds me of a submarine re-charging its batteries on the surface well away from any hostile craft, fired a long-range torpedo at the Declaration; but some skilful helm work at Delhi, by Vallabhbhai Patel in particular, caused it to miss its mark. The chagrin of the old snake vented itself, I am told, in a venomous letter to Patel. The All-India Congress Committee met at Delhi in the first week in January, and after considerable and often heated argument put out what they termed an acceptance of the Statement of 6th December. Unfortunately it was far from being an unequivocal acceptance and was qualified in such a way as still to leave doubt as to the *bona fides* of the acceptors. I believe that Nehru and Co. had considerable difficulty in carrying it at all, and might perhaps have been unable to do so without the qualifications; though my own judgment would be that if they had had the political courage to stand out for unqualified acceptance they would have won through. As it was, their attempted appeasement of the extremists was hardly successful, since both Jai Prakash Narain and Sarat Chandra Bose resigned from the Congress Working Committee (though I believe the resignation of the former was not accepted—he is a personal friend of Nehru). Nehru also contributed a characteristic outburst against both the Muslim League and British good faith which did not improve the atmosphere.

Thus it took just a month in this land of political irresolution and procrastination for one of the major parties to decide on indecision. It then remained for the Muslim League to announce whether it was now prepared to rescind the Bombay Resolution and to join the Constituent Assembly.

Jinnah was even more dilatory than the Congress. He lingered in London, he conferred in Cairo—where I am told he made a poor impression on those of the Arab League whose sympathy he tried to enlist—and retired to bed in Karachi.

It was not till the end of January that the League Working Committee met; and decided to maintain their former attitude of non-co-operation in the work of the Constituent Assembly. It was, I think, an unwise and short-sighted decision; but the Congress had been equally unwise and short-sighted in providing all the excuses for the League attitude. Not only had their acceptance of the Statement of 6th December been equivocal; but the conduct of business in the Constituent Assembly, which met on 9th December and again on 20th January, had been unnecessarily provocative, especially Nehru's premature resolution in favour of a Republic. Gandhi too was mixing politics with prayers and chicanery with piety in his usual sanctimonious but cryptic fashion.

The League's resolution seems to me to be based largely on the naval theory of 'A Fleet in Being'. So long as they remain in the sheltering harbours or narrow waters of Sind, Bengal and the Punjab, and do not risk the superior broadsides of the Congress in the open seas of the Constituent Assembly at Delhi, they feel that they still have a chance of securing a Pakistan of some sort. It is the submarines and the mines of the Congress subtlety in debate that they fear more than open conflict.

The Congress members of the Cabinet after a few days deliberation sent in a demand for the resignation of the League members from the Cabinet, on the grounds that their entry into the Government had been conditional on their coming into the Constituent Assembly; and that it is impossible for a Government to have in it representatives of a Party whose official programme is opposition to the policy of the Government. The League have countered with a statement that the Congress itself is off-side since it has never genuinely accepted the Mission's Plan.

I have referred the claims of both Parties to Your Majesty's Government for adjudication. Meanwhile Cabinet meetings here go on quite smoothly and even good-humouredly. The League team, except for Liaquat, is not an impressive one. I have formed a very good opinion of Liaquat, who has a great fund of imperturbable commonsense and a gift of clear statement. I wish I had had to deal with him instead of Jinnah as the League leader. The others are not the equals of the Congress members in debate. Chundrigar, Commerce Member, is earnest and has the forensic ability of a lawyer arguing a case, but lawyer-like he wraps himself in unnecessary detail, and he is quite without humour. Nishtar, from the North-West Frontier Province, Member for Communications, has about the same moderate degree of ability as Chundrigar, is almost equally wordy, but is less seriously minded and has a sense of humour. Ghazanfar Ali, from the Punjab, Member for Health, is a political buccaneer, rather disreputable, rather noisy, but with a very definite personality and humour. He was inclined to be the 'enfant terrible' of the Cabinet, raising the communal issue on all occasions, but I think he has a hint from Liaquat, since he has lately been quiet or has stayed away. Mandal, the League's Scheduled Caste nominee, is Law Member... He is usually traveling the country to attend Scheduled Caste political meetings; when he does come to the Cabinet he is silent or silly.

There has been one change on the Congress side—Maulana Azad has replaced Asaf Ali, appointed Ambassador in Washington, and has taken over the Education portfolio. Azad is a

charming old gentleman, a great Arabic scholar and a sincere patriot, one of the most attractive characters in Indian politics. He knows English quite well but will not speak it. His infrequent contributions to debate have to be translated. His influence is always for moderation, but his influence is, alas, not very great. Nor is he, I think, an administrator.

Asaf Ali, who is now in Washington, is a little cock-sparrow who would like to be a peacock. I am told that he spent some time after his appointment designing himself a diplomatic uniform with much gold lace and finery, and was very crestfallen when Nehru said that uniforms were unbecoming to disciples of Gandhian simplicity. Nehru, by the way, succeeded in putting a fast one across me over Asaf Ali's appointment. He mentioned it to me as a possibility, and I made no comment, as I supposed he would put it up to me with other, and perhaps more suitable, names. But he apparently told the External Affairs Department that I had agreed, and had the name wired home for Your Majesty's approval without further reference. He did not even consult his colleagues, some of whom were furious.

The policy of the Princes towards participation in the Constituent Assembly has been intricate. But on the whole they have managed to form a fairly united front, and seem to be satisfied with the result of the first round between their Negotiating Committee—composed partly of Princes, partly of Diwans and containing some very able men—and the corresponding Committee of the Assembly; though both sides give varying accounts and interpretations of what actually happened. It probably amounted to little more than preliminary sparring. The second round, on 1st March, may be more lively. Meanwhile, the Congress have been reconnoitring the Princes' position for soft spots in which to make a breach, and think they have found one in His Highness of Baroda, who has again withdrawn to the country houses and racing stables of England, leaving apparently instructions with his Diwan to deal direct with the Assembly, independently of his fellow Princes.

So much for the general political situation. There are certain other matters, all connected with politics, which seem to need mention.

The first concerns the obsequies of the Secretary of State's Services—Indian Civil Service and Indian Police. They are so obviously moribund in their present form that the Indian political leaders have demanded that a date for the funeral should be fixed, promising that they will rise like phoenixes as true servants of India instead of a foreign Power. But the phoenixes have demanded compensation for their pyrotechnical performance, which was not specified, they claim, in their original charter. Arthur Henderson has recently paid a visit to Delhi to discuss this question with my Government, but without success. I do not wish to be disrespectful to one of Your Majesty's Ministers, but it was obvious that he did not carry guns enough to meet the quite formidable arguments on the Indian side, and that he really stood no better chance than a 10-gun brig would have had against a ship of the line. There is a lot of force in the Indian case against their liability for compensation; and Patel, the Member in charge, shoots straight.

In the UK Mission on the Sterling balances it was perhaps the reverse. Sir Wilfred Eady was so stoutly armed and put up so good a case that the Indian negotiators, on the Departmental level, have run for shelter under the guns of the Ministry. There will have to be a further conference on a higher level.

The last current issue I need mention is the state of affairs in the Punjab, which is causing considerable anxiety. The position of the Government, the only Provincial Coalition Ministry, has been unstable ever since the last election; and the largest single party, the Muslim League, have had strong hopes of ousting it, though they could not form a stable Ministry themselves. A month ago the Premier, Khizar, an attractive but not a very strong character nor always wise,

decided to ban two institutions which are really political 'private armies', the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (Hindu) and the Muslim League Guards. In theory he was quite right, these bodies are a menace to peace; but his judgment of the results proved at fault. He expected no trouble, but the League reacted so strongly to the suppression of their Guards that he withdrew the ban. The League seeing a chance to discredit and possibly overthrow the Ministry, continued the agitation, directed now against an Ordinance issued some time before giving the Ministry drastic powers to maintain order. The situation is dangerous, since the Hindus and Sikhs are getting restive, the rival communities are not unequally balanced, and trouble in the Punjab is likely to take violent forms.

An effort is being made to arrive at a compromise. As usual face-saving is one of the main considerations.

So much for current politics. Since I received the Prime Minister's intimation of recall, I have looked back on the three and a half years during which I have tried to guide Indian policy. The following paragraphs give the ideas which lay behind my actions, and may possibly be of interest to Your Majesty....

My efforts since I returned from England have been directed to the following objects, so far as internal security is concerned:

- (a) That we should have as good and detailed a plan as possible for the protection and withdrawal of our nationals in an emergency;
- (b) that we should try to prevent British troops being used for the suppression of one party in the interests of another, and that we should not become involved in communal or labour disturbances if we can avoid it; and
- (c) that we should for as long as possible maintain the stability and integrity of the Indian Army, which is at the present time perhaps the brightest part of the Indian outlook.

The Cabinet at home has now taken a definite decision to declare that our control of India will be ended by the middle of 1948; and I hope that they have given my successor, whose name I was delighted to hear, either a definite plan for the withdrawal, or a free hand....

I have spent some 13 years of my life in India; 2 1/2 years as a child, 5 years a subaltern, and nearly 6 years as Commander-in-Chief and as Viceroy. My five years as a subaltern were some of the best of my life; and my six years as Commander-in-Chief and Viceroy the most interesting, but also the most exacting. I should have liked to see the end of the drama of British rule in India; but since the Government have thought it advisable to make a change, they could certainly not have made a better choice. I am now busy packing up, at shorter notice, I suppose, than any previous Viceroy has had.

May I be permitted in conclusion to offer Your Majesty my humble thanks for all the kindness and consideration you have shown to me during my tenure of this high office; and for the great honour you have done me in conferring on me the dignity of an Earldom.

I hope that Your Majesties are enjoying the tour in South Africa, but it sounds exacting.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Majesty's humble and devoted servant,

WAVELL



23. Congress Invites Muslim League for Discussions

Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan, 9 March 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 68–9.

My dear Nawabzada,

2. Whatever our individual views might be in regard to these matters, it is obvious now that the time has come for a practical appreciation of events and speedy decision. The British are fading out of the picture and the burden of this decision must rest on all of us here. It seems desirable that we should face this situation squarely and not speak to each other from a distance. Whether we can come to an agreement or not, I do not know. But even if we fail, some solutions of the problem will be forthcoming because the time has come for them and they can no longer be delayed. In the ultimate analysis there may be two or three courses open to each one of us and we shall have to choose.

3. During the last three days the Congress Working Committee have given earnest consideration to the present situation and have passed a number of resolutions. I am enclosing a copy of three of them for your information. This will give you some idea of how our minds have been working. We have tried hard to find a way out of the present tangle and have made certain suggestions which avoid any compulsion on any group.

4. It is no longer good enough for any of us to criticize the other from a distance. Hence my suggestion that you and I might meet to discuss these matters. I am not thinking so much of any long discussions in regard to details but rather a consideration of the broad aspects of the problem.

5. You will notice that the Congress Working Committee has passed a resolution inviting representatives of the Muslim League to meet Congress representatives. This invitation will no doubt be conveyed formally to the General Secretary of the Muslim League. My own approach to you is entirely informal and apart from that formal approach.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24. Deadlock in the Interim Government

Extract from a Letter from V.K. Krishna Menon to Louis Mountbatten, 13 March 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 946–50.

INDIA HOUSE, ALDWYCH, LONDON, W.C.2,

My dear Lord Louis Mountbatten,

I enclose the last page of my notes, which was inadvertently left out of the copy I gave you.

As I told you, there are a number of matters to be included in it if the basic idea appears to be of any use. If you need me, I shall be glad to see you again before I leave. Your A.D.C. apparently knows how to get in touch with me. I recognize the importance of hastening slowly, but it appears that in India things will not rest as they are. There is a grave threat of famine also, which may add to complications, but at the same time makes effective central authority essential.

I was glad to see you and to have had our talk. Perhaps you will let me know sometime what you think of what I have said.

Yours sincerely,
V.K. KRISHNA MENON

...Section II. *The crisis in the Government.*

- (1) The decision of the Congress to force the issue of a genuine coalition or the dismissal of the League members is still suspense *for the moment*, pending (a) the arrival of the new Viceroy and (b) the slight hopes of response from the League to a further approach.
- (2) The resolving of the crisis, in my view, *rests basically* on the relation of the Ministry to the Viceroy—that is, British power.

The assumption of a new role by the Viceroy quite obviously (not merely willy nilly) is essential to a change for the better in the present situation.

- (3) The Attlee declaration, apart from all other causes, makes it both logical and incumbent on the British side that its power (as distinct from its influence) should not only rapidly diminish (to vanishing point in 1948) but that *immediately there should be a change in this relationship whereby the entire onus of administration is in the hands of the Interim Government.*

It is the failure on the part of Lord Wavell to accept this position, and his unfortunate excursion in the contrary direction since the middle of last September, that is largely responsible for the present crisis.

- (4) When the Viceroy assumes this new role (analogous to that of the King in England or the Governor General of a Dominion) certain consequences follow:
 - (a) Leadership (as distinct from multiple leadership) emerges in the Government.
 - (b) If the Government contains Moslem Leaguers, they will either tend to merge into a *genuine* coalition or be reduced to impotence.
 - (c) If the League is in opposition within the Government or a constitutional opposition outside, the Congress, which has the leadership, will be forced at every step into behaving as though it were a partner in a *genuine* Coalition.
 - (d) If on the other hand the League (or indeed any group) are in unconstitutional opposition, relying on violence and anarchy, there would be a Central Government strong and resolute enough to deal with the situation.
- (5) (i) The result of the step thus suggested is to bring right into the forefront the main long term issue both in the way of (a) the future constitution and unity of India, (b) the authority for taking over, and
 - (ii) to render the problem of I(4), Indo-British relations, capable of approach by the British side in more practical terms and in a friendly atmosphere.
- (6) Failing the assumption of this new role by the Viceroy, a crisis of some kind or another will be precipitated within the first few weeks of his arrival. This is inevitable, and if this happens I(2), I(3) and I(4) become far more complicated, and the economic, political and administrative situation in India will approach disaster.
- (7) A strong Government, capable of enforcing its authority centrally and of co-operating with the Provinces, is indispensable for dealing with the economic situation which in the next 12 months threatens to be disastrous (famine included).

- (8) In the new situation, the role of the Viceroy is by no means a negative one. His influence would be very potent and his assistance sought. His role would be historic and would make the regime not one of surrender and abdication, but one of a new leadership.

Section III. Taking over.

- (1) In July 1948 it is obvious there must be machinery for taking over. This machinery may well be
- (a) that which is established under a new constitution by a Constituent Assembly with or without Moslem League participation; or
 - (b) the Interim Government (under Dominion conditions) or
 - (c) the de facto repositories of power and power relationships: or
 - (d) some machinery arbitrarily decided by the outgoing authority.

I do not propose to deal with the question of what constitution may emerge by one process or another.

The immediate problem is what has to be done for obtaining comparatively stable conditions for (a), (b), (c) and (d) above, or some combination of these.

In hard reality this poses the question, *what about the Moslem League* and, in a lesser way, the Princes, and what solution or way out can be found by the Viceroy using his great influence as contemplated in II above?

- (2) What I propose here is intended as a realistic approach rather than a crystallized formula, and I think aloud in this way.

Recognize, if the League so desires it, its claim for 'Moslem homelands'—Pakistans.

This recognition is possible only on the basis that the homelands are to be limited to those areas where at present the Moslem population is predominant, and where the League holds an appreciable majority of elected seats.

In other words, it is impossible to think in terms of homelands on the basis of British provinces. This is not a question of whittling down Pakistan or driving a bargain on it, but of seeking the only method which would enable a Pakistan to be created at all.

Therefore I propose the following:

- (a) A Western Pakistan in the North-West, to include the Moslem majority districts of the Punjab together with the Moslem districts of Sind, with an approach to the sea at Karachi, irrespective of the composition of the population on this boundary. Any attempt to provide a homeland which is boxed in on all four sides is an unfair offer from the League point of view.

The port of Karachi, irrespective of its predominant non-Moslem population and all-India importance, to be included in Western Pakistan, thus giving the League a first-class sea and air port and a great city.

The remainder of the Punjab to be constituted into a separate province of all-India.

The question of the remainder of Sind has to be thought out.

- (b) Eastern Pakistan in the North-East, to include the districts of Eastern Bengal which are predominantly Moslem, and certain areas of Assam, thus partitioning Bengal (shades of Curzon!)

The problems here are (i) the comparatively strong opposition in Bengal to partition and (ii) Calcutta.

I believe that partition is the price that will have to be paid for any stability in Bengal.

With regard to Calcutta, any solution which hands over Calcutta to Pakistan will be unstable and impractical. The reasons are well known.

On the other hand, the League has to be given a port on the East, and the solution is that as part of the compromise settlement India should build a large-sized city and port in Chittagong, that is, provide the money for it however many millions it may cost.

- (c) *Question of powers and status.* The Pakistans shall be styled as autonomous states, and not provinces. They should have all the attributes of statehood except foreign relations and defence. These two cannot in any event, before 1948 be made available to any Pakistan, because any new state created would have no foreign relations by that time even if it succeeds in getting recognition, except with the co-operation of the rest of India. This is therefore a problem of the future, and is dealt with further below.

Defence is equally not capable of being vested in any Pakistan at the time of its creation. Even if it were, it would confer little power on Pakistans, as the heavier defence of all-India would reduce the defence power of the Pakistans to impotence.

On the other hand it is proposed that the Pakistans as here contemplated should have vaster powers than for the groups under the Cabinet plan. Therefore they should be given not merely the title of autonomous states, but all the competence except the two mentioned above, that is to say all tariffs, currency, control of communications, including posts and railways, flag, external trade, control of resources and independent heads of states. They should also be accorded the right to secede from India and establish themselves as independent states when they are in a position to obtain foreign recognition and to build up their defences sufficiently effective[ly] for the independent protection of their homelands. This right of secession must be genuinely conceded, irrespective of whether it will be used. All these rights and functions can obviously be made amenable to any agreements of give and take with India.

- (d) The Pakistans would, as different from the provinces, maintain a High Commissioner or Agent General, or some such functionary of the semi-ambassadorial level at New Delhi, who would be the link on the problems of defence and foreign relations and be a general liaison in the neighbourly relations contemplated. Obviously no taxation will be levied in the Pakistans, except by their own Governments. They would make an agreed contribution annually to the Government of India in respect of defence and foreign policy, which shall not be varied except with consent.
- (e) The inclusion of areas other than those mentioned here need not in principle be ruled out. For example, if the League is able to make terms with the rest of the Punjab and bring such areas into its Pakistan, it should be permitted, but such consent must be a matter of plebiscite in which at least 75 per cent of the population votes in favour of such incorporation.
- (f) It should be pointed out here that in this arrangement the Pakistans receive a far higher status of independence and considerably more powers and functions than

the present provinces claimed for Pakistan would receive if power were handed over in July 1948 on the basis then likely to exist in the absence of any agreement of this kind. For provinces, in spite of autonomy, have much less power than contemplated for the Pakistans as herein....

25. Ghosh Meets Leaders in London

Letter from Sudhir Ghosh to Vallabhbhai Patel, 14 March 1947

Sudhir Ghosh Papers, File No. 23, NMML.

My dear Sardar,

I am sorry that I have been so long in writing to you. But I wanted to wait till I was sure that I knew the mind of people at this end. I have now seen all the three people concerned about Indian affairs, namely, Cripps, Attlee and Pethick-Lawrence, and I am now in a position to give you an appraisal of the situation.

I will first tell you about Cripps who is the pivot in the set-up here in so far as India is concerned. I saw him within a few hours of my arrival here on the 3rd March and I battled with him for two long hours after dinner till 11 o'clock. When his mind is riveted on a particular line of thinking he just cannot see the difficulties of other people and their points of view. I told him that when the 20th February statement was issued Panditji picked out only the positive parts of it and said something which was above politics and gave it a warm welcome, but there were things in the statement which were extremely vague and obscure and had increased the difficulties of the Congress Leaders in their dealings with the States and the Muslim League. He very emphatically said that if the States imagined that the British government would be prepared to negotiate with them directly and they were likely to get a little more from the British than from the Indian Constituent Assembly then they are a lot of lunatics. I pointed out to him that there was no inducement at all in the statement either to the Muslim League or to the Indian States to be more co-operative; on the other hand the indication that the British government would be prepared to hand over power to the Provincial governments in the event of the Indians failing to agree among themselves has naturally given the Muslims the impression that if they sat quiet and non-co-operated till June 1948 then the Muslim majority provinces of Bengal, the Punjab and Sind would be automatically separated from the rest of India and they would be in a position to work out some kind of Pakistan. I mentioned to him that even if the British government was prepared to hand over power in that very untidy manner to the Provinces and to the States it would not be possible for them to hand over the whole of Bengal and the whole of the Punjab to the Muslim League; for there was already a strong movement in Bengal amongst the Hindus for the partition of the province and that the same demand would be made by the Sikhs and the Hindus in Eastern Punjab. He made it perfectly clear that the British government would never agree to any partitioning of provinces before they leave; they feel that it is none of their business and if the Indians wish to revise provincial boundaries it is for them to arrange it amongst themselves. 'The process cannot go on ad infinitum; you must stop somewhere and the province is the limit. It is absurd to talk about handing over power to parts of provinces', he remarked. He however went on to say that he was sure that Mr Jinnah and his colleagues were furiously thinking whether their insistence on Pakistan was going to lead them anywhere; the Pakistan they are likely to get would be very different from what they wanted and it may not be worth their while. I said I hoped that it would be possible for

him and his colleagues to say something in the course of the debate in the House of Commons which would make it obvious that the British government was not going to do anything to encourage disruption in India. He laughed and said 'what you really want, my dear Sudhir, is that we should be partial to the Congress and enable them to coerce the Muslim League. This we cannot do. We are determined to be impartial. Congress must win the co-operation of the Muslims.' I explained to him that there was no question of anybody wanting the British government to be partial to the Congress. We fully realize that the majority party has to win the co-operation of the minority party and all that was suggested was that nothing should be said which put a premium on non-co-operation. He however does not see the point and, as you now know, they all stuck to the line of what they consider 'impartiality.' On the evening of the debate Lord Pethick-Lawrence called a meeting of the Labour MPs and explained to them the importance of everybody being absolutely impartial in their speeches; he sincerely believes that any impression given to the Muslim League that Labour Government is in any way aligning itself with the Indian majority would spoil the chances of an agreement.

I asked Sir Stafford what he exactly meant when he said that Congress must win the co-operation of the Muslim League and what he had in his mind came out. It is clear to me that Cripps and his colleagues have always fostered a grievance in their minds against the Congress leaders that they trifled with the British plan as set out in the statement of 16th May. They are all convinced that the origin of our present serious difficulties in India was the public statement made by Panditji in July last at Bombay when he said, according to them, that Congress acceptance of the British plan meant no commitment on the part of Congress and that Congress was free to do what they liked with the British plan. This is a sore point with them and they just cannot get over it. All of them—particularly Cripps—have a deep feeling about it. They think that this one event changed the whole course of our affairs. It is no use arguing with them about it. Then I asked him if he would plainly tell what they now wanted Congress to do. What they really want (and here Cripps, Attlee and Pethick-Lawrence are all united) is that Congress must now by way of a supreme effort remove the doubts and suspicions in the Muslim mind, tell the world quite bluntly and in detail what they really mean when they say they accepted the British interpretation of the Cabinet Mission's plan as set out in the statement of 6th December you will remember that some time ago Liaquat Ali asked in a public statement a number of detailed questions as to what the Congress meant by accepting the British interpretation. Cripps thinks Liaquat Ali did it clumsily but what the British government really want is a detailed answer by Congress to these questions in a dignified form. If Congress is prepared to do this before the arrival of the new Viceroy the British government would be in a position to do the rest.

I have carefully examined what Attlee, Cripps and Pethick-Lawrence had to say to me. They do not believe that it will be necessary for them to transfer power in bits in an untidy manner; nor are they interested to do so. They think that the intelligent mind of Mr Jinnah will soon realize that the Pakistan he is likely to get is not worth anything; if on top of this realization in Mr Jinnah's mind Congress is in a position to say in detail what is meant by acceptance of the British interpretation of the plan, then it will be possible for them to give Mountbatten such instructions and directives as would enable him to get the Muslim League into the Constituent Assembly.

I also raised the question of their agreeing to treat the Interim Government as a Dominion Government and I discussed the brief draft showing how the present government can be

converted into a Dominion Government which V.P. Menon gave me when I left. Cripps rejected the proposition. Pethick-Lawrence is examining it carefully. I am afraid they will never agree to treat the Government as a Dominion Government and to treat Panditji as *de facto* Prime Minister. Their argument is that they are going in July 1948 and that India is going to be fully independent after this brief period and, in view of that, why should the British take the responsibility of handing over power to the Indian majority? If they treat the Government as a Dominion Government it means handing over real and full power to the Congress and Indian majority; this they are not prepared to do. The Muslim League has always resisted it and the British Government think that this would be unjust to the Muslims and they would be wrong in doing it. In any case it is not their business, they feel, to make any temporary arrangement for the period between now and June 1948. But if Congress is prepared to accept the British interpretation of the 16th May statement in detail, as desired by the British government it will be possible for the British government to give such advice to the new Viceroy as will enable him to make the Interim Government a real Cabinet and a team that works. This does not mean that they will be prepared to ask Panditji to form a government as they did last August. They were particularly cautious about discussing the directives they are giving to the new Viceroy. But it is not impossible that the new Viceroy will ask for the resignation of all the members of the Government and then re-form the government; when the Muslims are invited to rejoin the government they do so on the understanding that the government is to function as a Cabinet and not two lots of people who work against each other. The Viceroy is to remain his own Prime Minister but they believe that the relations between the Viceroy and Panditji is bound to be so crucial that they think it highly unlikely that there will be any difficulty at any time. As far as I can understand their mind they will give the new Viceroy a large measure of freedom to make his own decision in this matter.

I pointed out to Cripps that acceptance of the British interpretation in the way they want really means that Assam must be handed over to Bengal and the Bengalis should be left free to do what they like with the Constitution of Assam. Their answer is that the right thing to do is not to assume that the Bengal representatives in section C are a gang of tricksters and to leave it to them to do justice or injustice to Assam. What happens if injustice is done is a thing to be decided at the time and it is essential not to talk in advance about what will happen in the event of Bengal representatives doing injustice to Assam. Here they blame Bapu for all the difficulties that have arisen.

What I have said above will give you some indication of what is to be expected from the new Viceroy. If a policy of unqualified friendship is pursued by our people there is nothing to be lost and a great deal may be gained. I will write again.

My life here is a continuous series of interviews. My coming here seems to have aroused a great deal of interest and I have been spending most of my time seeing a steady stream of visitors. I have also established contacts with most of the newspaper editors. You may have seen the recent Leader in the 'Times' which was rather helpful. I shall soon be able to get together my little office and take over the work from Joyce. I have had a long talk with Joyce, and spoke to the Secretary of State about it when I saw him.

Love from us,
SUDHIR

Chapter 4. The Last Viceroy

1. British Foreign Minister Urges Viceroy's Recall

Letter from Ernest Bevin to Clement Attlee, 1 January 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 431-3.

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

P.M./47/1

Prime Minister

I must express my strong views with regard to India, as I mentioned to you this morning. I have examined this problem in relation to Egypt, Palestine, the Middle East, and all the Arab States and Persia, and I cannot help feeling that the defeatist attitude adopted both by the Cabinet and by Field-Marshal Wavell is just completely letting us down. I do not believe that, with leadership, the Indian Army is in the bad way that people suggest. I can quite understand that with a mind like Wavell's the demoralization of the whole of the Army and the Police must be inevitable and I would strongly recommend that he be recalled and that you find somebody with courage who, even if he were the last man left there would come out with dignity and uphold the British Empire and Commonwealth.

2. Further, I cannot help feeling that the President of the Board of Trade is so pro-Congress that a balanced judgment is not being brought to bear on the importance of the Moslem world, while, on the other hand, probably, the Minister of Defence is too pro-Moslem. I listened to yesterday's discussion and frankly, I was despondent and did not think that the facts justified the pessimism that seemed to pervade the whole Cabinet. I am against fixing a date. I am willing to support a declaration, as we have done, that we are ready to hand India over as a going concern to established governments. I do not mind, even, using the plural in this sense, if Nehru and Jinnah are not going to agree, but the qualification should be that they can preserve law and order. I cannot get it out of my head that there must be millions of Indians who, as a result of the murder incidents in the last few months, would welcome a strong and courageous lead so as to preserve their safety. Personally, I do not think it depends on the number of British troops there, but it is the complete lack of leadership in the Indian Army which I believe will cause the disaster that will overtake the British Empire. In fact, you cannot read the telegrams from Egypt and the Middle East nowadays without realizing that not only is India going, but Malay, Ceylon and the Middle East is going with it, with a tremendous repercussion on the African territories. I do beg of you to take a stronger line and not give way to this awful pessimism. When I saw Wavell and Alexander on the 21st December, I was filled with dismay.

3. Now, as regards administering the country under Section 93; with an army of over 30,000 in India I cannot be persuaded that, if such a situation arose, we could not find the men from

the Indian Army and at home to administer Section 93. What would happen if the Congress withdrew? The people of the Provinces would want government, and stable government. They would be just terrified at the idea of no government. The Indian Army itself would not know what to do. Therefore, if we were able to move into Germany and other occupied countries and find administrators among the young men from the Services, as we had to do, why can't we find them from the Forces in India and at home? Secondly, continued searching for men with reputations leads us, I believe, into a morass. Try someone untried and it is remarkable how they will rise to the occasion.

4. Therefore, my view is that while we issue a declaration that it is our determination to clear out of India and to hand the responsibilities to Indians we should declare that it is our determination to hand it over as a going concern and to place the responsibility squarely on their shoulders of failure in that respect. I would impress you with this fact. As Foreign Secretary, I can offer nothing to any foreign country, neither credit, nor coal, nor goods. I am expected to make bricks without straw—to use that old proverbial phrase. And on top of that, within the British Empire, we knuckle under at the first blow and yet we are expected to preserve the position. It cannot be done and I beg of you in all sincerity, even if it does involve a certain risk, to take it, and I believe the world will respect us.

5. Now as regard the United States: I sent you a report from America which was handed to me by Byrnes. I have not had a reply but why cannot we use the United States to put pressure on Nehru and on Jinnah? Why not bring the whole of our diplomatic power to bear at this stage to make the Indian politicians realize that it is not merely Great Britain they are facing but a very much wider area. It would be especially useful if they could be made to say that Great Britain is taking a magnanimous attitude and I believe the United States can be honest in such a way to bring a tremendous amount of pressure to bear on the Indian politicians. We appear to be trying nothing except to scuttle out of it, without dignity or plan, and I am convinced that if you do that our Party in this country, as a leading Party in this new world settlement, will lose and lose irrevocably when the public become aware of the policy of the Cabinet at this moment.

ERNEST BEVIN

2. Appointment of the New Viceroy

Letter from Louis Mountbatten to Clement Attlee, 3 January 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 451–2.

DESPATCHES AND RECORDS OFFICE, SOUTH EAST
 ASIA COMMAND, 7 RICHMOND TERRACE,
 WHITEHALL, S.W.1

My dear Prime Minister,

I have thought over very earnestly all that you said to me on the 1st January.

I absolutely understand why it is not possible to secure an open invitation from the Indian Parties. But Sir Stafford Cripps tells me that he is prepared, if you concur, to inform the principal Party leaders in person, shortly before my appointment is announced, that it is my earnest hope that they will welcome it and will give me their support—or, at the very least, that they have no personal objections.

It makes all the difference to me to know that you propose to make a statement in the House, terminating the British 'Raj' on a definite and specified date; or earlier than this date, if the Indian Parties can agree to a constitution and form a Government before this. I feel very strongly that I could not have gone out there with confidence, if it had been possible to construe my arrival as a perpetuation, at this moment, of the viceregal system, or of our imposing our nominee to arbitrate in their affairs.

I am not really sure, however, what HM Government wish me to try and achieve in India and I do not feel I can undertake to carry out your wishes until I have seen the written directive which HM Government propose to give to the new Viceroy, as well as the actual text of the statement in the House. But I am writing this letter on the assumption that I shall feel capable of trying to comply with your directive.

I deeply appreciate your offer to give me every assistance in forming my new staff. I told Sir Stafford, when he came to see me yesterday, how honoured and touched I was that he should have offered to come to India with me, but I made it clear to him that I felt the presence of a man of his prestige and experience could not fail to reduce me to a mere figure head in the eyes of the people he would be negotiating with; and that I felt this was not the impression that either he or you would wish the appointment of a new Viceroy to create. On the other hand, I did not wish to lose the help of his unrivalled knowledge; and I made a proposal to him which I hope you will allow me to place before you verbally.

Since you approved my choice of General Ismay as my Chief of Staff I have asked him; and I know you will be delighted to hear that he is prepared to give up his well earned rest in Australia, and to come and help me if I am appointed to the post.

I feel it is essential that I should be allowed to fly home as often as I feel it really necessary to do so (say, every 3 or 4 months) for personal discussions with you and the Secretary of State; and that General Ismay should also come home from time to time.

I am very grateful to you for suggesting that I should be left on the Active Flag List of the Royal Navy so that my future employment in the service would not be prejudiced; and I would ask you to be so kind as to make it clear, in the announcement of my appointment (should it materialize) that I am on loan for this short period.

I hope I do not need to assure you that if I go, it will be with a complete realization of the difficulties and of the importance of achieving the task which I am so honoured that you should be proposing to give me. Although it would be our intention to observe the Protocol necessary to uphold the position of Viceroy and Vicereine, my wife and I would wish to visit Indian Leaders, and representative British and Indian people, in their own homes and unaccompanied by staff; and to make ourselves easier of access than the existing protocol appears to have made possible.

Yours very sincerely,
MOUNTBATTEN

3. Cabinet Considers Future Policy towards India

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet India and Burma Committee, 3 January 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, p. 447.

At the meeting on 31st December, 1946, the Cabinet had considered a draft statement annexed to CP (46) 456 regarding the future policy of His Majesty's Government towards India. They had agreed, that the draft should be recast on broader lines.

The Committee now had before them a revised draft (IB (47) 1) prepared in the light of the Cabinet discussion. They considered the draft in detail and a number of amendments were made.

In the course of the discussion the following points were made:

(a) During the series of the Committee's meetings which had been attended by the Viceroy, it had emerged from the discussions that during the process of our withdrawal from India, even though it was not possible to carry out to the full the provision of the Government of India Act, 1935, the constitutional framework must be preserved until the final handing over of power. The Viceroy should have a clear understanding that this was the Committee's view.

The Committee had, however, reached no clear decision on the question whether, within the constitutional framework, the first step should be as complete a withdrawal as possible from the Southern Provinces or whether the process of withdrawal should go on *pari passu* over the whole of India.

The Committee had first inclined to the former course. In favour of this it was recalled that the Viceroy was most anxious to relieve himself from the embarrassing situation in which he found himself at present whereby he was virtually bound to act at the dictation of the Congress leaders if they threatened that the Ministries in the Congress Provinces would resign, since he was quite unable to provide himself for the administration of the Provinces under Section 93 of the Government of India Act.

It was, however, now argued first that this threat must, in fact, remain so long as the present constitutional framework was maintained and, secondly, that the Southern Provinces were precisely those in which the threat was least likely to be employed.

As our withdrawal could not, in any case, be complete if the constitutional framework was to be maintained, would not the wiser course be to carry it out *paripassu* over all parts of India so that we were left with a gradually decreasing skeleton administration spread over the whole country?

No definite decision was reached on this point but Ministers agreed that it was one on which it might be necessary to give the Viceroy a clearer indication of the views of His Majesty's Government.

(b) In this connection they considered that it was wrong to press too far the analogy of a military withdrawal. The operation now to be begun was not so much a military as a political operation of great delicacy. It must be regarded not as a withdrawal under pressure from the enemy but as a voluntary transfer of power to a democratic government. To an ever increasing degree the Viceroy would assume the position of a constitutional ruler and he and the British officials would act in conformity with the policy of that Government.

(c) Ministers discussed whether it would be possible to include in the statement a positive assurance to present and former member of the Secretary of State's Services that they would receive the pensions which they had earned and would be given compensation for the interruption of their career. They agreed that it would not be possible at this stage to go beyond a general statement to the effect that His Majesty's Government would negotiate with the successor authorities in regard to matters arising out of the transfer of power.

At the same time it was the Committee's strong opinion that there was a moral obligation on his Majesty's Government to ensure fair treatment for the Services and that in the last resort, if adequate provision was not made for them from Indian funds, it must be made from United Kingdom funds. But it would be inexpedient to make any public statement to this effect at the

moment, as it might prejudice the discussions which the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for India was about to undertake with the Government of India.

(d) As soon as the draft statement had been approved by the Cabinet, the Prime Minister should send a personal message to Dominion Prime Ministers informing them of the course of action which His Majesty's Government intended to pursue.

The Committee:

Took note that the Prime Minister would arrange for the draft statement as amended during discussion to be laid before the Cabinet for their approval.

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

3RD JANUARY, 1947

4. Preparations for Departure as Viceroy of India

Letter from Louis Mountbatten to King George VI, 4 January 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 452–4.

My dear Bertie,

You will have heard I was recalled after only a week-end in Switzerland. I had a meeting with the PM and Stafford Cripps on my arrival who pointed out that it was not feasible to comply with the conditions I gave in my letter of 20th and that as it was now more urgent than ever that I should go out, would I accept under any other conditions.

They offered me 'carte blanche' and said I could take anyone out on my staff I liked. Sir Stafford 'bouleversed' me by offering to come out himself on my staff if I'd accept and the PM agreed! That was a swift one because if I do have to go I don't want to be hamstrung by bringing out a third version of the Cripps offer!!!

After over an hour we broke up and the next day Stafford came round to see me and again assured me of his desire to place his services at my disposal—so I had a brain-wave and said 'I'll accept your offer on one condition and that is that you take the appointment which I consider would help me most'—He fell for that and agreed—then I said 'I'd like [you] to go to the India Office and thus be my rear-link with HMG'. He was a bit staggered but finally agreed, subject to the PM.

I then sat down and wrote the PM a letter (a copy of which I enclose) and when I next saw him and Stafford I asked the PM to put him at the India Office and he said he'd give this request favourable consideration.

Meanwhile, as he said I could have any team I liked I dashed round and asked Pug Ismay and Eric Mievile to chuck everything and come with me to start the last Chukka in India—12 goals down! Both agreed at once though one has to chuck a 4 months holiday in Australia and the other one his new job.

With a team and a spirit like that we're half way home—I only await the directive and announcement before giving a final answer. Actually the PM has offered that the Under Secretary for India Arthur Henderson, who is now out there, should give my message to the leaders and I've accepted.

They wanted me to meet Wavell at Karachi but I said 'no—I must meet him at home—because if he produces new difficulties to me and explains in what way he is dissatisfied with HMG's attitude then I'll have no chance of talking this over with you. Besides if you want him

to resign nicely you must ask him in person—otherwise he'll say "I won't resign—go ahead and sack me!"

So Wavell is to be sent for and I suppose Edwina and I'll go out early in February. I'm insisting on my own York like in SEAC and like Harry has....

Ever your dutiful, affectionate and harassed

DICKIE

5. Announcement of a Time Limit

Letter from Clement Attlee to Wavell, 8 January 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 490–1.

TOP SECRET

10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL, S.W.1.

My dear Viceroy,

Thank you for your letter and good wishes for the New Year. I am glad that the York facilitated your return journey. I have been waiting to reply to you until after the Cabinet but this was delayed owing to the pressure of other urgent business. We had also to have two meetings.

Before you left you wrote me a letter in which you set down a number of points on which you desired my personal assurance. These points had been the subject of discussion with you at the India Committee and you were acquainted with the recommendations to be submitted to the Cabinet and of the extent to which they covered these points.

I informed you in my reply that the recommendations would be brought before the Cabinet. This has now been done.

While there was agreement that in the event of the Moslem League failing to enter the Constituent Assembly it would be desirable to announce a time limit for the continuance of British rule in India, it was considered that it would not be advisable to fix a day. While it was considered that plans might be made for that event and that troops might be moved, there was strong confirmation for the view expressed by the India Committee that the proposal for the abandonment of all responsibility for the four Southern provinces was unacceptable.

The Cabinet did not approve of the approach to the problem on the basis of a military evacuation. It was considered that a different approach was required—namely, that of close co-operation with the Indian Governments at the Centre and in the Provinces in order to work out with them plans for handing over the Government in India, as a going concern. There was a feeling that withdrawal by stages was an encouragement to fragmentation.

I am afraid that this will be a disappointment to you and in the circumstances I think it would be desirable that you should come over here again as soon as possible in order that we may review the situation.

Yours sincerely,
C.R.A.



6. Wavell's Assessment of the Indian Political Situation

Letter from Wavell to Clement Attlee, 17 January 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 510–11.

TOP SECRET

VICEROY'S CAMP, INDIA

My dear Prime Minister,

I have received your letter of the 8th January. I am very sorry that the Cabinet have not been able to give me a more definite policy. You have heard and considered my views, and I will not repeat the arguments that I have already laid before you. I must, however, put it on record that in my opinion the Cabinet's decision, or lack of decision, increases the risk to our nationals in India, and is likely to diminish the chances of a settlement between the two parties.

As to the 'different approach' which you recommend, I have always tried to give the freest possible hand to my Government at the Centre; and the Governors in the Provinces have cooperated with their ministries to the extent of making their Special Responsibilities almost a dead letter. But the two main parties are perpetually at loggerheads, and complete cooperation with one party tends to drive the other into extreme courses. If the Governors and I are compelled to acquiesce in everything that the major party proposes, not only are we unable to fulfil those responsibilities to Parliament which the Cabinet are so anxious to retain, but also by our powerlessness we encourage that party to excess and the other, in desperation, to 'direct action'.

Although the immediate situation here looks a little better, and though I am doing all I can to make the League take a reasonable line, the communal bitterness is such that optimism is quite unjustified. It seems most unlikely on present form that an agreed Constitution on the Mission's plan can be framed.

There is one matter on which—quite apart from whether the Muslim League enter the Constituent Assembly or not—His Majesty's Government must make up its mind in the very near future; and that is the date on which the Secretary of State's Services in India will be wound up, and the terms of compensation which will be offered. This decision is necessary in order to keep the Services together for the period that remains; also, to refuse the united demand of the parties and of the Provincial Governments to fix a date would be quite contrary to the Cabinet's general policy of close cooperation. I hope therefore that this decision will be made in the near future.

All I can do at present is to draw up plans against the possibility of an emergency withdrawal, so as to provide, so far as may be, against the dangers that would attend it. I have arranged with the Commander-in-Chief to form a joint Civil and Military Planning Committee for this purpose.

I shall also consider the arrangements necessary for an orderly transfer of power and withdrawal of our forces in the event of a peaceful transition being possible. Arrangements for this eventuality would of course be fully discussed with the Interim Government, and if necessary with Provincial Governments, but such consultation clearly cannot take place yet; there must first be either a statement in Parliament about the time limit, or the prospect of a satisfactory result from the Constituent Assembly.

I am not clear from your letter what time limit you have in mind if you make a statement. For the purposes of planning it is important that I should know what you and the Cabinet

intend; I should be grateful for an early reply on this point. I do not think that there would be any advantage in my coming home again in the near future. My return would cause much speculation and might result in political negotiations being still further complicated and delayed by the idea that HMG was contemplating some further proposal. The decisions of the Muslim League whether to join the Constituent Assembly or not, and of the Princes whether or not to negotiate with the Constituent Assembly, are not likely to be reached until some time in February. Discussions between us before these decisions could, I think, have little purpose, since I have nothing fresh to put before you. It will therefore be better to wait till these decisions are known, and perhaps until after the budget session of the Assembly here. The situation will then be clearer and my Planning Committee will have had time to make detailed proposals.

I suggest therefore that I might return in March or April for further discussions, unless some serious crisis occurs meanwhile. If all is well, I should like to take a month or two's leave at home after the discussions, since I have had no rest for a long time.

Yours sincerely,

WAVELL

7. Political Situation in India

Letter from G.E.B. Abell to Ronald Harris Forwarding a Note by N.P.A. Smith,
Director of Intelligence Bureau, 24 January 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 542-4.

SECRET
No. 592/99

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE, NEW DELHI,

My dear Ronald,

HE thinks the Secretary of State may be interested in the enclosed note on the situation in India by Smith, the Director of the Intelligence Bureau.

Yours sincerely,
GEORGE ABELL

Enclosure

British Angle

1. The game so far has been well played, in that (a) both Congress, and the League have been brought into the Central Government; (b) the Indian problem has been thereby thrust into its appropriate plane of communalism (c) some kind of an opportunity for orderly evacuation now presents itself through the existence at the Centre of a government to which power can be transferred.
2. I fear there is a tendency, now that we are temporarily in relatively untroubled waters—from the purely British angle—to forget that a storm will sooner or later again arise, and to move much too slowly in shedding our responsibilities. The fullest advantage should be taken of our present breathing space. In my view, the Secretary of State's control over civil officers should be abrogated at the earliest possible moment. This is only fair to the officers and has the political advantage that a decisive gesture of this kind will help to keep the problem on its correct communal plane.

3. The Quit India policy has now the general acceptance of almost all British officers. In the Congress Provinces, this acceptance is accompanied by a realization of its complete inevitability and a general support of the line so far taken by HMG. In the non-Congress Provinces, and particularly in the Punjab, civil officers are apt to criticize bitterly HMG's policy and the moves made by HE. This difference of outlook arises from difference of political circumstances. The Punjab is inclined to regard the rest of official India as defeatist and much of the rest of India regards the Punjab as living in a dead or dying past.
4. Grave communal disorder must not disturb us into action which would reintroduce anti-British agitation. The latter may produce an inordinately dangerous situation and leads us nowhere. The former is a natural, if ghastly, process tending in its own way to the solution of the Indian problem.

The Indian Angle

What is likely to eventuate? Very difficult to answer. My own views are:

- (a) Whatever the position a few years ago, communal antagonism has now reached such a point of bitterness that it is difficult to see how Hindus and Muslims can jointly work the future. This antagonism may lessen, but the cleavage and the difference of culture is so marked as to make healthy cooperation unlikely.
- (b) It is clear that India, with its strongly fissiparous tendencies, can only continue to exist through a strong Centre.
- (c) It is equally clear that this strong Centre will not be conceded by the Muslims, and is probably unattainable.
- (d) The weak Centre of the present target carries within itself the seeds of disruption. It is difficult to foresee a joint policy in foreign affairs, and consequently in defence and finance.
- (e) Indian leadership is so inept that there is little prospect of these inherent difficulties being overcome.
- (f) I have little faith therefore in a successful outcome, in the long view, of the attempt to maintain a unified India. As I have said for some months, Pakistan is likely to flow from Congressstan (the acceptance of office by Congress).
- (g) I do not think Pakistan will advantage the Indian Muslim, who is likely to be squeezed and embarrassed by stronger forces East and West of him; but if he is determined to have it, he will get it.
- (h) If Congress were wise, they would either attempt to dissolve by a psychological approach the psychological mistrust which exists or they would establish a strong Centre for areas of Hindu preponderance and to the exclusion of the N-West. But I doubt if Congress is wise enough to do either of these things.
- (i) Even if a strong Hindu Centre were established it is doubtful whether it could maintain itself for long in the face of a left-wing attack based on conditions rife for trouble, in labour, the peasantry, linguistic and provincial jealousies, and other things. Jai Prakash Narain and his ill-assorted horde threaten the future. Congress might conceivably handle them and the Communists with sufficient firmness, but they have not much time to spare, and with Nehru in the Cabinet, I doubt their capacity or even willingness.

- (j) In brief, I am pessimistic and fear, first, Hindu–Muslim separation, and secondly, some measure of Balkanization. The threat of the extreme Left-Wing may serve to bring present Hindu–Muslim leadership closer together, but this remains to be seen.
- (k) If pessimistic, I am also philosophical about all this. If we cannot control natural forces, we must accept them, keeping our eyes steadily on reasonable British interest.
- (l) The psychological approach which I would commend to Congress would have to be one of great generosity—an offer, if necessary, of one over parity. I suggested this to Sardar Patel and told him, moreover, that any attempt to force the Muslims would result, through the disintegration of the police and Army, in the loss of NW India. His reply was that, if I thought that generosity would placate the Muslim *Oliver Twist*, I did not understand either the Muslim mind or the situation. With which sentiment I am tempted to agree.

N.P.A. SMITH

8. Attlee Justifies Wavell's Dismissal

Letter from Clement Attlee to Wavell, 31 January 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 582–3.

PRIVATE AND PERSONAL

I have your letter of the 19th in reply to mine of the 8th. It is clear from what you say with regard to Government policy that there is a wide divergence of view as to the course which should be followed during the interim period. I had hoped that it would have been possible for you to have returned here during January to discuss the situation which has arisen.

I am very conscious of the heavy burden which you have carried and of the great services which you have rendered during this difficult period. I know that you undertook this task from a high sense of duty.

You were, I understand, informed that your appointment was a war appointment and that while the usual term for a Viceroy is five years, this might not apply. I think that three years was mentioned. This has now expired. I know, of course, that prior to your appointment as Viceroy you had had the heavy strain of high commands in war and, as you say in your letter, you have had no rest. I appreciate that you desire a month or two's leave at home;

But the Indian problem is entering on a new phase, which will be very exacting and may be prolonged. The next few months are of great importance.

In view of all these circumstances and of the fact that it is specially necessary that the Viceroy should be in full agreement with the policy of His Majesty's Government, I think that you may agree that the time has come to make a change in the Viceroyalty.

I recall that you expressed your readiness to retire in the event of disagreement on policy and this would seem to me to be the appropriate course to follow.

An announcement should be made with as little delay as possible in order to allow time for the appointment of your successor and for him to take over at the end of February or early in March. The normal announcement about your successor would be prefaced with the statement 'Field-Marshal the Viscount Wavell who accepted the Viceroyalty as a war appointment is now retiring'. I have not looked into details, but if as a result you are denied any leave of absence which you would normally have had, you may be sure that you will not suffer financially.

I should like to submit your name to His Majesty for the dignity of an Earldom in recognition of the self-sacrificing and loyal service which you have displayed in your long and distinguished career in India both to the Indian people and to this Country and the Commonwealth.

9. 'Wavell's Warnings to Quit'

Note on Policy from Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 3 February 1947
PRO, CAB 134/344, Acc. No. 4042, NAI.

The Viceroy House,
New Delhi

Dear Pethick Lawrence,

I forward herewith a copy of a note on policy by my Joint Planning Committee.

Since His Majesty's Government has refused to accept the proposal for a phased withdrawal by territorial stages, this Committee has now proposed a phased withdrawal by what may be termed 'gubernatorial stages'. This process is as a matter of fact already inevitable, unless there is a complete reversal of policy, and has already gone far. What is proposed by the Committee is simply to give a date limit for the various stages.

2. We are in fact on the horns of a dilemma. Our object is peaceful transfer of power with as little disturbance as possible. On the other hand, our power to influence events is rapidly diminishing, and the prospects of agreement between the main parties and of the production of an acceptable constitution seem to be receding with almost equal rapidity. I can see no prospect of a constitution being formed by the end of 1948. Should we then announce a date for our final departure or not?

3. The arguments for and against are nicely balanced thus:

For such an announcement

- (a) We have no longer any real power to control events, and to retain responsibility without power is useless, undignified, and dangerous.
- (b) The main Parties will never come to an agreement if a Third party is there to whom either or both can appeal; without us they will be forced to come to a *modus vivendi*.
- (c) If we stay, we may become involved in a situation like that of Palestine, when we can neither emerge with credit nor stay with safety.
- (d) The longer we stay, the more power we are bound to place in the hands of the majority party, the Hindus, to the detriment of the Minorities, and probably of the States.

Logically therefore it would seem to the advantage of all parties—Hindus, Muslims, States, ourselves—that we should leave at an early date and let them settle their disputes without our intervention.

Against such an announcement

The arguments are almost purely psychological. We still have very considerable influence and prestige with Indians; and whatever they may say in favour of our immediate withdrawal many of them do still look to us for help and advice and we do still command their confidence in great measure. Further, it goes against the grain to leave India to confusion if there is still any chance of our preventing it by remaining. In the eyes of our own people and of the

world we may also seem to be renouncing a duty 'one task more declined, one more footpath untrod'.

It really comes to this, should we take the risk of being forced to withdraw in danger and ignominy, or stop on without power in the hope of still being able to help India to her destiny.

4. The choice of a line of action is not easy. I agree with most of what the Committee has put forward, but I do not think they have made quite clear their idea in recommending a date for the withdrawal of British troops without at the same time announcing a date for the final transfer of power. This would be contrary to the policy of His Majesty's Government given in their telegram 1308 of 28.1.47. But the idea of the Committee was that while the withdrawal of the troops would be equivalent to a transfer of power, it should not be announced as such, in order that there should still be a Constitution in force, that of 1935, though the only symbols of it would be the Governor-General and the Governors, as in a Dominion, and even these might be Indians.

5. For the moment the only advice I can offer to His Majesty's Government is to take a decision about the Secretary of State's Services as early as possible.

A little later in the year His Majesty's Government must take a definite decision about the final transfer of power, since I consider at least one year's notice must be given. I think that if His Majesty's Government take a decision at once about the winding up of the Secretary of State's Services, they can perhaps afford to wait till say June to make a definite decision on the date of withdrawal of British troops. By that time the effect of the Services decision will be known and the general development of the political situation will be apparent.

But by June at the latest His Majesty's Government must definitely decide how much longer they will retain responsibility for India.

6. The note was written before the League passed their Karachi resolution, but that does not affect the general thesis or the plan.

Yours sincerely,
WAVELL

Rt Hon The Lord Pethick Lawrence, PC

Note by
JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE
(Reference para. 5 of the Directive)
31.1.1947
(As finally amended)

In some ways the general situation may for the moment appear more satisfactory than it was during most of 1946, since the Muslim League, which last Autumn threatened direct action and revolution, is now a partner with the Congress in the Interim Government. But that is only a superficial view. The coalition in the Interim Government is little more than a façade; its members have no common policy and seldom meet except at formal cabinet meetings. The Central Government has been Balkanised and is becoming daily more ineffective. Much essential business is held up because an inter-departmental policy is needed and none can be agreed. Even if a policy is arrived at, the authority of the Centre vis-à-vis the Province (even the Congress Provinces) is weakening. This is true for instance of the vital fields of food and textile controls.

2. In the Provinces the administration continues to run down. The Police are, in many provinces, demoralized and this is largely due to Ministerial ineptitude. An outstanding example is Bihar. Private armies are tolerated by the Ministries. Communists and Left Wing Congressmen are allowed to carry on revolutionary and subversive propaganda. Labour is very restless, largely because of communist influence, and strikes in essential industries threaten the whole economy of the country. All such unrest is fomented and exploited for political ends.

3. These are grave symptoms but the greatest danger as always is communalism. In spite of the 'Coalition' at the Centre, Hindu-Muslim feeling is perhaps more bitter than it has ever been and even the most optimistic doubt whether there is any real prospect of Hindus and Muslims living amicably together.

4. The general outlook in fact is gloomy, but there is for the moment no strong anti-British agitation and with the two major parties in the Interim Government there is something of a breathing space. It may be short-lived, and cannot justify inaction. Waiting on events will be fatal. India can now only solve her problems for herself, and will be hampered in solving them unless positive steps are taken for an early completion of the transfer of power.

5. There is no sign of the Constituent Assembly producing a constitution by the end of 1948. It is probable that we shall have to hand over before a new constitution is framed, and we must have a plan for the purpose.

6. How can the final transfer of power be effected? It is not ordinarily appreciated how much power has already been transferred. Popular governments are in effective control both at the Centre and in the Provinces. The unmistakable indications that HMG will transfer their authority altogether within a short while have made it a matter of common prudence for 'loyal' Indians whether official or non-official to make their peace with the political parties. In fact the process of transfer of power has gone so far that it is inevitable that it should continue and its pace will increase with the rapid Indianization of the officer ranks for the fighting services.

7. But however much power may already have been transferred, it is most important that the final stage should not be so sudden as to threaten India's stability. There should also be adequate warning about HMG intentions. It would not be fair to the Interim Government or to the Provincial Government suddenly to move all British troops out of the country without previous warning. In order to make the planning of the future Indian Armed Forces possible HMG's intentions need to be made clear a year in advance.

8. It would also be unfair not to give adequate warning to the States, who have been told that paramountcy will be retained throughout the interim period. They anticipated at present that the period may be prolonged. If it is to be short they will have little time in which to make, in consultation with the Central Government, the new arrangement necessary to ensure the maintenance of essential services and to obviate the disintegration which must result without such arrangements from the independence which the lapse of paramountcy will thrust upon them.

9. Adequate warning is necessary for two other reasons. British businesses in India must be given a chance to decide their policy, and there must be time to arrange a programme of additional shipping so that those British men, women and children who will leave the country, either temporarily or permanently, can be provided with passages. From our enquires it is clear that an announcement about the withdrawal of British troops would lead to a much larger demand for passages, and there will be demands from Indians as well as Europeans.

10. Thus the transfer of power must be phased, and the outline of the programme must be known well in advance. To meet these requirements the viceroy proposed that HMG should

decide on a definite programme of phased transfer of territory to Indian control and that the first stage (withdrawal of British troops and civil servants from the South of India) should be announced and carried out at an early date. This scheme had the advantages of retaining a measure of power for the Governor General but HMG considered it impracticable and rejected it.

11. Can there not be a phased transfer of authority instead of a phased transfer of territory? The most important features of such a policy would be as follows:

(1) There would be gradual adoption of the convention that India is treated as a Dominion.

(2) Similarly the convention would be allowed to grow up that the Governor General and Governors act on advice.

N.B. These two processes have gone a long way already.

(3) Consistently with this general policy it is necessary to meet at once the demand of the parties for the winding up of the Secretary of State's services. If, however, the Central Government and the Provincial Ministries so desired British officials who wish to go could be compulsorily retained in service until say March 1948, with the object of preventing administrative dislocation.

(4) The officer ranks of the Indian Army are already being rapidly Indianized, more rapidly Indianised than is generally appreciated.

(5) Paramountcy in relation to the Indian States will gradually lapse, and there will be a gradual return, to them of the rights surrendered to the Paramount Power. A policy on these lines has already been outlined to Residents by the Political Adviser.

(6) It would be announced in July 1947 that British troops will be withdrawn in the last quarter of the calendar year 1948. This would give the Interim Government time to plan and would give fair warning to the British population. British troops would not however be reduced below the figure of roughly 20,000, which they will reach in January, 1948, until the final withdrawal.

12. A gradual process of this sort would reduce greatly the administrative difficulties attending the transfer of power. The objection so far has been the fear of 'handing over to the Congress' without safeguards being secured for the Minorities. But (a) we are now left with no alternative, and (b) the announcement that British troops are to be withdrawn will make it clear that they will not be used to support a Hindu Raj.

13. We attach great importance to the early winding up of the Secretary of State's Services. This would mark a decisive stage in the gradual transfer of power. The Secretary of State's control is already an anachronism, and attempts to protect the services, while often ineffective, cause unnecessary friction with the Ministers.

14. The early withdrawal of British troops is also an essential part of the policy. Whatever our desire to ensure peace and stability we cannot make British troops available indefinitely to perform internal security duties, and support in power what may be a party or a communal government.

15. On the withdrawal of the British troops the final transfer of power would in fact have taken place, and it would presumably be necessary for the Indian Government to legislate so as to introduce an oath of allegiance to India (instead of the King) for Indian personnel of the armed forces. If India remained for the time being a Dominion, British officers of the Indian Armed Forces could be retained as Commanders provided certain necessary conditions

were incorporated in an agreement with the Government of India. If, however, India did not remain in the Commonwealth or failed to execute an agreement, British personnel would be limited to the role of advisers in the Indian Armed Forces, and even in that capacity could only serve if there was a treaty which provided inter alia for direct access to and protection by HM Ambassador in India.

16. The rough programme would be as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| April to May, 1947 | - Secretary of State's services wound up |
| July, 1947 | - Announcement that British troops would be withdrawn in the last quarter of the calendar year 1948. |
| September, 1947 to April, 1948 | - Regular programme of extra shipping to provide transport for those who wish to leave India. |
| 31st March, 1948 | - Release of those S/S officials who have been compulsorily retained in service at the request of the Indian Government (of. Paragraph 10 (3)). |
| Last quarter of Calendar year, 1948 | - Departure of British troops. |

N.B. There is much to be said for giving the Interim Government the longest possible notice (in confidence) about the intention to announce in July, 1947 that British troops will be withdrawn at the end of 1948. This will be likely to earn the goodwill of the Interim Government. On the other hand if the information leaked out it would be necessary to make a public announcement and in order to prevent a large demand for passages to the United Kingdom during the hot weather it is considered desirable that the public announcement should not be earlier than July, 1947.

17. The underlying principle of this policy would be to throw an increasing weight of responsibility on the parties and especially on the Congress as the majority party at the Centre. Since an increasing measure of power would also be transferred it may be that neither party could afford to resign and leave the other in undisputed possession of such great authority. His Majesty's Government's action in announcing the departure of British troops towards the end of 1948 could not legitimately be criticized as hasty since the Congress have asserted that they anticipated being able to frame a new constitution within two years of the inception of the Constituent Assembly.

18. Whatever we do there is a very grave risk that owing either to revolution or to creeping paralysis of the administration the country may lapse into confusion. But the policy we advocate apart from being apparently almost inevitable, provides the maximum amount of continuity, gives a chance of maintaining the integrity of the Indian Armed Forces and of securing a friendly and stable successor Government, and steadies the process of transfer of power.

19. Though there would be an announcement that British troops will be withdrawn in the last quarter of the calendar year 1948 there would be no date on which in the absence of a new constitution the old constitution would cease to function. If after the withdrawal of British troops the Indian Government in power wished the Governor General, Commander-in-Chief and Governors to continue in office and gave reasonable assurances, no doubt His Majesty's Government would be prepared to consider the matter. Otherwise it would be desired to appoint Indians to these posts in consultation with the Governments concerned and let them

take over about the same time as the withdrawal of British troops. It is just possible that if India continued for a time under the present constitution she might ultimately find herself persuaded to remain in the Commonwealth rather than become independent.

20. We cannot advise what Parliament action is necessary to get authority for this policy, but the only points that must inevitably be announced are the winding up of the Secretary of State's services and the withdrawal of British troops. From the Indian point of view there are great advantages in avoiding a spectacular debate in Parliament. The transfer should be carried out as quietly as possible and the existing constitution should be allowed to run on until another is substituted. The Act of 1935 is by no means ideal for such a purpose, but it can be adapted by convention. The control of the Secretary of State will for instance disappear. If the Government of India holds together and can put through the necessary legislation it may do so, but it is more likely that an attempt will be made to carry on with the constitution more or less as it stands until another is passed. In any case there should be no deliberate destruction by us of the façade of the continuing Government of India.

10. Wavell's Reaction to His Dismissal

Letter from Wavell to Clement Attlee, 5 February 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 624–5.

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE, NEW DELHI

My dear Prime Minister,

I have received your letter of 31 January, in which you inform me of your intention to advise His Majesty to terminate my appointment as Viceroy in a few weeks time.

As you say, my appointment was a war one and no fixed term of office was given me. I think you are in error about a term of three years ever having been mentioned; but the point is immaterial, since the three year term passed several months ago without your giving any indication of wishing to make a change.

You are causing me to be removed because of what you term a wide divergence of policy. The divergence, as I see it, is between my wanting a definite policy for the Interim period and HMG refusing to give me one. I will not at this time enter into further argument on this.

I do not of course question your decision to make a change. I have no desire except to serve the State to the best of my ability; obviously I cannot continue to do so if I have not the confidence of the Government in power.

I think, however, that I am entitled to observe that so summary a dismissal of His Majesty's representative in India is hardly in keeping with the dignity of the appointment. It has been usual to give a retiring Viceroy six months' notice of his replacement. I may recall to you that I wrote to you six months ago, at the beginning of August last, suggesting that you might now wish to replace the soldier by a politician, but that you gave no indication of any desire to make a change. Whether my conduct of my office since then has deserved dismissal at a few weeks notice is for others to judge.

You can hardly have failed to appreciate the inconvenience and expense which you are causing to me and to the whole of my large personal staff by directing me to leave at such short notice; and I hope that I shall be given at least till the second week in March, to avoid the indignity, as well as the inconvenience of a scuttle. I note what you say about any entitlement of mine to leave. I too have not looked into details on this matter, but will do so and will

communicate with the Secretary of State. I hope that the expense and dislocation unexpectedly caused to my personal staff will be recognized and considered.

It is desirable for official and personal reasons that I should know the name of my successor, who has presumably been selected, as early as possible. You will of course give advance notice of date and terms of announcement.

I thank you for what you say about my services, and will gladly accept your proposal to submit my name for the dignity of an Earldom.

Yours sincerely,
WAVELL

11. Transfer of Power in June 1948

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting, 13 February 1947

T.O.P., Vol. IX, pp. 687–8.

INDIA

Constitutional Position

(Previous Reference: C.M. (47)4th Conclusions, Minute 1)

THE PRIME MINISTER recalled that at their meeting on 8th January the Cabinet had agreed to defer for the time being the issue of the proposed statement of policy declaring the Government's intention to transfer power in India in the course of 1948. He had been keeping a close watch on the development of the constitutional position in India, in consultation with members of the India and Burma Committee; and they were satisfied that the time had now come to make a final effort, by the issue of this statement, to compel the two political parties in India to face the realities of the situation and collaborate in framing a new constitution. They therefore recommended that the statement should be issued in the course of the following week.

Various changes of wording had been made in the draft statement which had previously been considered by the Cabinet (CP (47)1). These were of minor importance only. There was, however, one change of substance which required the approval of the Cabinet, namely, that the date to be given for the transfer of power in India should be 'June 1948' rather than 'the middle of 1948'. He was satisfied that the statement would not be fully effective unless a definite date were given.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA said that, while he concurred in this recommendation, he thought it right to warn the Cabinet that it might not be possible for the transfer of power to be effected smoothly by June, 1948. Even though the work of the Constituent Assembly proceeded without further delay, it might well be that by June, 1948 there would be no Central Government to which power could be transferred.

It was the view of the Cabinet that this consideration did not outweigh the advantages, for the purposes of the present statement, of specifying a definite date. It would do no harm if in the event the date had to be postponed because the Indians themselves were not ready to accept the transfer of power.

The Cabinet:

- (1) Agreed that the proposed statement of policy should indicate the Government's intention to transfer power in India in June, 1948.

- (2) Authorized the Prime Minister to arrange for the statement to be made in both Houses of Parliament in the course of the following week.

12. Preparing to Announce Departure

Extract from a Note by J.F. Burrows, 14 February 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 705–8.

TOP SECRET

1. I understand that the contingencies for which planning is required are:
 - A. An announcement by HMG that they intend to withdraw their power in India within a time limit irrespective of a constitutional agreement:
 - B. A situation of widespread disorder and confusion.
2. I consider that in Bengal there would in all probability be no period of grace or at best only a very brief breathing space between the situation caused by 'A' and situation 'B'—if such an announcement were made now, with the Muslim League out of the Constituent Assembly and threatened with expulsion from the Interim Government. In present conditions an announcement of the kind contemplated would precipitate a crisis and disorders which would probably be both communal and anti-British, and there would be little chance of an orderly withdrawal of Europeans from Bengal. (I should, however, not be opposed to such an announcement if the Muslim League were participating in the Constituent Assembly and the Interim Government).
3. I have to visualize three possible situations if there is a break-down in the Cabinet Plan for the framing of a new constitution and the handing over in orderly fashion of control in India:
 - (i) the Muslims in revolt;
 - (ii) the Hindus in revolt;
 - (iii) both Muslims and Hindus in revolt against HMG and the established regime.

Before dealing with these separately I should explain that, following on their sweeping election successes in 1945 and with the recent adhesion of even Fazlul Huq's handful of dissident Muslim MLAs and several desertions to the Ministry from the Congress Scheduled Castes, the Muslim League command an absolute majority in the Bengal Legislature and, so long as they hold together, there is no possibility of any alternative Ministry unless the League agree to and support a coalition. If I am forced to dismiss my predominantly Muslim League Ministry or if that Ministry resign or are called out, they can make the constitutional functioning of any other Ministry impossible. In this context I must again emphasize that I neither have the officers, nor would circumstances allow of it if I had them, to administer the province under Section 93 in the teeth of active Muslim League opposition. The Imperial Services are depleted, disheartened and apprehensive. The Provincial Services cannot be expected to reproduce their old loyalty to a regime that is passing away before their eyes and are, indeed, already thinking on communal lines. The announcement of a date for our withdrawal, without the prospect of any regime, reasonably representative of both major communities, being ready to take our place, would sharpen the communal cleavage and bring about an immediate alignment on a communal basis. The Police—still largely a non-Muslim

force, especially in the Armed Branch where the hillman can no longer (since the Calcutta riots especially) be implicitly relied on as free from pro-Hindu bias vis-à-vis the inhabitants of the plains—would rapidly disintegrate into its communal elements and would have to be written off very largely if not completely as an instrument of impartial administration. I therefore no longer have the machinery with which to run a Section 93 administration in the face of opposition. So long, then, as the League Parliamentary group hold together—as I think in present circumstances they will—I have no other course open save the alternatives of working with them or dispensing with any form of administration under the 1935 Act and governing so much of the Province as I can under something like Martial Law. This administration could be neither extensive nor long-lived.

In situation (i), with the Muslims of Bengal in revolt against HMG and/or a Congress-controlled Centre, I should immediately lose control of the whole of East and most of North Bengal: and, as the Hindus of Bengal could not form an alternative Ministry, even in alliance with the European Group and other non-Muslim elements, I should have no reason to hope for any active support from that community and the administrative break-down elsewhere in the Province might soon be nearly as complete as from the first it would be in East Bengal.

In situation (ii), with the Hindus in revolt, South-West Bengal would largely go out of control (as parts of it did in 1942) and road and rail communications with Provinces to the West and South-West would almost certainly be closed except to armoured columns. Hindu revolt would evoke a Muslim reaction if, I still had a League Ministry in office and my present Ministry's control of their followers *outside* the Legislature is already shaky and does not inspire me with confidence that they would be able to control any popular movement (for example, an anti-Hindu or an anti-Landlord movement) initiated by the Muslim masses. (The tail would undoubtedly wag the dog).

If situation (iii) should arise—active revolt by both Muslims and Hindus—and it is the declared aim of the Communists and of some of the more extreme elements (including more than one student organization) in both the major communities to bring it about, I do not believe they would act in concert for long or avoid relapsing into communal conflict; but the situation would be precarious for the Europeans at the outset and I could obviously only aim at extricating the Europeans in the districts before all movement became impossible and they were mopped up, and then holding a part of Calcutta till evacuation by ship or flying boat became possible. Even so, to do anything effective for the Europeans scattered through the districts, I should have to move quickly and I should need aircraft.

4. In short:

If Muslims were in revolt, it would involve the immediate abandonment of East Bengal and much of North Bengal and the evacuation of the Europeans of Chittagong by sea or air.

If the Hindus were in revolt—and for this purpose I make little distinction between Congress, Mahasabha, Forward Bloc and the rest—we should lose control of considerable areas of West Bengal, including our lines of communication with Northern, Central and Southern India, and might expect sporadic outbreaks of terrorism in the towns of East and North Bengal.

Abandonment of either area (East and North Bengal or, parts of West Bengal) would be followed by massacres there on a scale that would shock the world. If in East Bengal, Gandhi would be one of the first victims.

The Communists are actively fishing in all our troubled waters and would give the disorders both an agrarian and an anti-British colour—the latter would not be difficult in the tea gardens of North Bengal or the industrial areas along the Hooghli, in West Bengal and at Narayanganj (Dacca).

Famine, on a disastrous scale, would accompany such disorders and would help to direct feeling against Europeans, whose houses would be attacked in the belief that they held food. This would lead at once to a general looting of unprotected European property.

5. In such circumstances I feel fairly confident that I could generally ensure the lives (though not the property) of the Europeans and Anglo-Indians in Calcutta and of those whom we could evacuate to Calcutta, assuming that I could count on the present number of British troops and certain A.F. (I) units that we have taken into account in our plans. The British element in the Calcutta Police is fairly strong.
6. I consider, therefore, that my first action in the event of an announcement of a date for withdrawal of British power (if made in present circumstances) would be to have the troops 'standing to' and prepare for a concentration of outlying Europeans at very short notice as soon as hostile reactions began to show themselves. The areas to be cleared would depend on the nature and source of the hostile reactions. I should require aircraft for this concentration....

13. Indian Policy Statement to Secure Adoption of Cabinet Committee's Plan

Telegram from Clement Attlee to King George VI, 14 February 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 704–5.

PERSONAL AND TOP SECRET

EPOCH 20. Mr Attlee with his humble duty to The King.

India. The next three following telegrams contain:

- (a) A formal submission regarding the Viceroyalty;
- (b) The final text of the Statement on Policy which Mr Attlee is proposing to make in the House of Commons on Thursday, 20th February.
- (c) An addition to the Statement on Policy dealing with the Viceroyalty, which Mr Attlee will make at the same time.

(2) The Statement on Policy referred to in (b) above has been communicated to Your Majesty's Dominion Prime Ministers.

(3) Your Majesty will see that this Statement states that it is the definite intention of His Majesty's Government to effect the transference of power in India by a date not later than June 1948.

(4) Your Majesty should know that the Viceroy advised that the general Statement on Indian Policy should not be made until a reply had been sent to Nehru's letter of 5th February, in which Congress said that it was no longer possible for members of the Moslem League to

continue in the Interim Government. After most careful consideration Mr Attlee has reached the conclusion that the right course is not to send a definite reply to this letter from Nehru, but merely an interim message to the effect that an important Statement would be made in a few days. Mr Attlee feels sure that the best remaining hope of securing the ultimate adoption of the Cabinet Committee's plan is to try to bring the Congress and the Moslem League together in the Constituent Assembly after they have studied the general terms of policy.

14. Punjab Governor Comments on Draft Statement

A Note by Evan Jenkins, 16 February 1947

IOR, R/3/1/130, Acc. No. 3448, NAI.

TOP SECRET

PSV has shown me the draft of HMG's proposed statement on Indian policy.

2. The essential points in this document appear to be the following:

- (1) HMG will transfer power in India to Indian hands not later than the middle of 1948. (paragraph 7).
- (2) If no constitution has been worked out by a fully representative Constituent Assembly before the middle of 1948, HMG will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over. The possibilities mentioned are:
 - (a) some form of Central Government;
 - (b) the Provincial Governments;
 - (c) an unnamed recipient, whose selection 'may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people.' (para. 10).
- (3) The process of transfer between the date on which the statement is made and the middle of 1948 will be gradual, and will probably involve relaxations of the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935. Legislation will be introduced to give effect to the final transfer. (para. 11).
- (4) The relations between the Crown and the Indian States will undergo no fundamental change until the final transfer of power, though some treaties may require adjustment. (para. 12). (The meaning of this passage relating to Indian States is very doubtful).
- (5) There will be negotiations between HMG and the 'successor authorities' in regard to matters arising out of the transfer of power. (para.13).
- (6) Facilities are to be given for the evacuation from India of European families (para.14).

3 The first thing that strikes me about the document is its astonishing vagueness. The only definite statement in it is that the British are to relinquish all power in India by 30th June 1948. Their successors may be a Central Government formed under a new constitution; *or* 'some form of Central Government'; or the existing Provincial Governments; *or a quantum quid* whose nature is not even broadly described. The process is to be gradual, but as there is no known *terminus ad quem* it is not clear how it can be consistent. The States are given a breathing space until 30th June 1948, after which they are apparently to fend for themselves. In the meantime

HMG are to negotiate with unknown successor authorities; and the European community are invited to send their families home 'for the time being'—an unconvincing euphemism.

4. The document is presumably intended to bring the Congress and the Muslim League up against reality and to force them to cooperate with one another. In my judgment it will have the diametrically opposite effect. If the British, as now appears, are leaving within seventeen months and are prepared to hand over power to those exercising *de facto* authority at the Centre or in the Provinces when the time comes, what incentive is there for the contending parties to get together? Few Indian politicians want an amicable settlement, except on their own terms, and the tendency will unquestionably be for all parties to seize as much power as they can—if necessary by force.

5. My particular concern is with the Punjab. Here, the struggle for power has already begun. There are three parties—the Muslim League representing the great majority of the Muslims, whose avowed aim is undiluted Muslim rule; the Panthic Sikhs who will resist undiluted Muslim rule *à outrance*; and Congress who, like the Muslim League, are part of an all-India organization, but would provincially side with the Sikhs. No one community can rule Punjab with its present boundaries except by conquest, and the only peaceful alternatives are (a) a Government formed by a coalition of all parties or by a non-communal party; *or* (b) a partition. If the Punjab were dealt with in isolation it might be possible to persuade the parties to take one or the other of these alternatives on the understanding that in due course the all-parties or non-communal Government would take over from the British, or that the Governments of the new partitioned states would do so. But the statement makes it impossible for the Punjab to take a line of its own, and even encourages the Muslim League and the Congress to set off all-India interests against provincial interests. The Muslim League in the Punjab will be encouraged by the Muslim League High Command to avoid a compromise, so as to increase the High Command's bargaining power in the Muslim minority Provinces; and the Punjab Congress will be expected to work (so far as is possible) for a *de facto* Central Government dominated by Hindus. In the Punjab, the statement as it stands may lead to an explosion of great violence. The statement will be regarded as the prelude to the final communal showdown, and the disturbances—if any—resulting from it might be of the gravest description. For example, the Sikhs might well attempt to seize the Central Punjab, including Lahore and to establish a provisional Government of their own.

6. In the situation contemplated HMG would still be responsible for the maintenance of law and order—my 'special responsibility' for the prevention of a grave menace to the peace or tranquillity of the Punjab would remain. I am not sure what object there would be in using Police or Troops to suppress a mass movement which, *ex hypothesi*, will be legitimate from 1st July 1948, or what the attitude of the Police and Troops would be to the suppression of such a movement. During the relatively minor disturbances now in progress there has, to my knowledge, been some uneasiness in the services as to the distinction between law and order and party or communal politics; and I think it unlikely that the services will hold. *Prima facie* the attitude of Punjabi troops would be very doubtful.

7. It is necessary to add a word about British personnel. The statement means not only the end of the Secretary of State's services—which was coming anyhow—but the entire elimination of the British, except perhaps for a very small number of men with odd ideas. I do not see how officials whose original contracts (in the broad sense) are being ended can be forced to serve on as men without hope, in conditions which will certainly involve great personal risk.

People will take risks in a good cause, but not in a faction fight which is none of their business. Without our British personnel we could not, even now, maintain order in the Punjab.

8. The decision of HMG to leave India by a stated date is a 'break-down' decision, involving the abandonment of all we have worked for many years. It is a very dangerous decision, amounting to an invitation to the warring parties to make real war upon one another. It is an impossible decision unless the authorities who are to receive power in 1948 are clearly defined now, and are assisted to prepare themselves for their task. If the Punjab were told that Central Constitution making had been abandoned; that routine Central administration of the subjects reserved to the Centre under the Mission's plan would be entrusted to officials; and that the Punjab must prepare itself to inherit all other powers from the British; we might get away with it. But even then our chance would be slender.

E.M. JENKINS

15. Wavell's Appeal to Reconsider Proposed Course of Action

Extract from a Telegram from Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 17 February 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, p. 733.

MOST IMMEDIATE

NEW DELHI

No. 298-S. My telegrams Nos. 291-S and 296-S

2. I think the appreciations by Burrows and Jenkins may be unduly pessimistic. They do not take full account of the possibility that the leaders of the Congress and League may as the result of the Statement make a determined effort to reach agreement of some sort.

3. Also I am sure that HMG must adopt a definite policy soon, and whenever the announcement is made there are bound to be objections and grave anxieties.

4. Nevertheless I cannot recommend HMG to disregard the views of the Governors. Even if the party leaders try to come to terms they may be unable to control their followers in the Punjab and Bengal, and the difficulty which Jenkins mentions of persuading the Services and Police to take action may be a serious one.

5. I therefore beg HMG most earnestly to reconsider their proposed course of action. I urge most strongly that the announcement to be made now should not (repeat not) include the date of withdrawal. It should contain something on lines of my telegram 270-S and if possible a decision on the Services. It is these two points which are the immediate issues in Indian politics, and an announcement which says nothing on them would create confusion and may precipitate a crisis....

After further discussion, THE PRIME MINISTER said that the issue was one which the Cabinet must be asked to decide on the following day. In the meantime, he would ascertain the opinion of the new Viceroy on the proposals put forward by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

Cabinet Office, S.W. 1.

20 THE FEBRUARY, 1947



16. New Statement of Policy May Destabilize Indian Armed Forces

Telegram from Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 17 February 1947
IOR, R/3/1/130, Acc. No. 3448, NAI.

MOST IMMEDIATE

NEW DELHI

TOP SECRET

No. 299-S. My telegram No. 298-S of today. Commander-in-Chief feels that the effect of the proposed announcement is likely to be detrimental to the stability of the Indian Armed Forces and may result in widespread indiscipline and communal trouble. He feels that the authority of the British officers which is the most binding element will be greatly weakened. He bases this opinion on the completely indefinite nature of the proposals for the handing over of responsibility for the government of the country, which he thinks will increase the present uncertainty and encourage the forces of disorder.

17. Drafting 20th February Statement

Extracts from Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, 18 February 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 748-52.

....The Cabinet:

- (1) Reaffirmed their decision that the proposed statement of policy on India should indicate the Government's intention to transfer power in India by June, 1948.
- (2) Agreed that the statement of policy (incorporating the amendment noted in paragraph (a) above) should be made in both Houses of Parliament on 20th February; and took note that the Prime Minister would arrange for the appointment of the new Viceroy to be announced in the same statement.
- (3) Took note that the Prime Minister would communicate the text of the proposed statement, before it was made, to the Leaders of the opposition Parties.
- (4) Authorized the Secretary of State for India to take unobtrusive steps to ensure that increased shipping facilities were available for Europeans wishing to leave India over the next few months.

18. Apprehensions regarding Effects of Policy Statement in India

Telegram from Clement Attlee to Alan Lascelles, 19 February 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 763-5.

MOST IMMEDIATE

TOP SECRET

EPOCH 29. Following for Lascelles from Prime Minister.

We have just received from the Viceroy a number of disturbing telegrams about the proposed declaration of policy regarding the transfer of power in India. As you will remember, the essential feature of the plan originally submitted to us by the Viceroy was that we should announce a definite date for the transfer of power, and one of the arguments in favour of this course which was strongly emphasized by the Viceroy was that we should not in any event be able to administer India efficiently after 31st March, 1948, because of the run-down of the

European Services and the tendency of Indians in these Services to look to the political parties rather than to the Government. If the original proposals of the Viceroy had been accepted we should already have announced some time ago our intention to transfer power by 31st March, 1948. After prolonged discussion here a somewhat different plan was evolved; but this retained the essential feature of specifying a definite date; and the Cabinet had taken a firm decision that we should issue on Thursday next, 20th February, a statement of policy, including the declaration of our intention to transfer power in India by June, 1948, that is, three months later than the date originally proposed by the Viceroy.

The Viceroy has now represented that a declaration of our intention to transfer power on a specified date may give rise to a serious situation in India. Instead of driving the two parties together it may encourage in each a tendency to seize what power it can, communal feeling may be inflamed and disorder may break out. The Viceroy has consulted the Commander-in-Chief and the Governors of Bengal, Punjab and United Provinces and they all take a pessimistic view of the effect of such a declaration in India. In these circumstances the Viceroy now recommends that we should not make any declaration of our intention to leave India by a specified date. He has submitted an alternative plan, but this was entirely impracticable from the constitutional and Parliamentary angle.

This volte-face by the Viceroy has placed the Government in a very difficult position, especially as he previously advised us that the Commander-in-Chief, the Governors and his officials were all in favour of a declaration specifying a definite date for the transfer of power. It was, as you know, on this basis that the new Viceroy agreed to undertake the difficult task of supervising the transfer; and I have verified that he would be unwilling to proceed to India if it were now decided that no definite term should be set in advance for the transfer of power. Moreover, the main object of making this declaration has always been to force the two parties in India to face realities and collaborate together in the framing of a new Constitution; and Ministers still feel convinced that for this purpose it is essential to name a definite date by which His Majesty's Government intend to hand over power in India. A declaration without a date would not convince the Indian politicians that we genuinely intend to hand over in the relatively near future and we should be suspected, as earlier Governments have been, of making communal differences an excuse for continuing British rule in India.

The Cabinet feel that a heavy responsibility rests on them in making this declaration in face of the latest advice from responsible men on the spot. They have also had to take account of the views expressed by Field Marshal Smuts, who believes that we should retain control in India until the communal differences have been resolved and a unitary Government established. After long and anxious consideration, however, the Cabinet have reached the conclusion that these last-minute representations cannot outweigh the solid reasons which led them to decide upon the course outlined in the proposed statement of policy and to arrange for the appointment of a new Viceroy charged with the specific duty of arranging for the transfer of power within a defined period. They have, therefore, decided to go forward with the policy previously approved and a declaration in substantially the terms of the draft in EPOCH 23 will be made in both Houses of Parliament on Thursday, 20th February.



19. Military Implications of the Statement of Policy

Letter from Group Captain D.C. Stapleton to A.V. Alexander, 19 February 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, p. 766.

TOP SECRET

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Reference: C.O.S. 207/7

Minister.

The Chiefs of Staff feel some anxiety concerning the proposed announcement of Indian policy about which you spoke to them this morning.

2. As the Chiefs of Staff understand it, it has been decided to issue a statement tomorrow, Thursday, 20 February, making it clear that it is our definite intention to transfer power in India into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948; there are apparently serious doubts in the minds of at least one of the Provincial Governors as to the effect this announcement will have; and the Viceroy himself questions the advisability of making this statement at this particular moment.

3. The Chiefs of Staff have not seen the proposed statement of all the telegrams which have passed between the Government and the Viceroy on the subject, nor are they aware of the views of the Commander-in-Chief, India. They cannot, therefore, offer the Government advice on its military implications, which may be serious.

4. In view of the anxieties of the authorities referred to above, however, the Chiefs of Staff do recommend strongly that His Majesty's Government should, before making the statement, make it quite certain that the Commander-in-Chief in India is ready to meet such implications as the issue of the statement may involve.

5. The Chiefs of Staff hope that, in explaining their position to the Prime Minister, you will also feel able to suggest that the Viceroy be consulted at once on the point in paragraph 4 above.

D.C. STAPLETON

20. Agenda for Mountbatten

Letter from Clement Attlee to Louis Mountbatten, 18 March 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 116, NMML.

My dear Mountbatten

The Statement which was issued at the time of the announcement of your appointment sets out the policy of the Government and the principles in accordance with which the transfer of power to Indian hands should be effected.

My colleagues of the Cabinet Mission and I have discussed with you the general lines of your approach to the problems which will confront you in India. It will, I think, be useful to you to have on record the salient points which you should have in mind in dealing with the situation. I have, therefore, set them down there.

It is the definite objective of His Majesty's Government to obtain a unitary Government for British India and the Indian States, if possible within the British Commonwealth, through the medium of a Constituent Assembly, set up and run in accordance with the Cabinet Mission's plan, and you should do the utmost in your power to persuade all Parties to work together to

this end, and advise His Majesty's Government, in the light of developments, as to the steps that will have to be taken.

Since, however, this plan can only become operative in respect of British India by agreement between the major Parties, there can be no question of compelling either major Party to accept it.

If by 1 October you consider that there is no prospect of reaching a settlement on the basis of a unitary government for British India, either with or without the co-operation of the Indian States, you should report to His Majesty's Government on the steps which you consider should be taken for the handing over of power on the due date.

It is, of course, important that the Indian States should adjust their relations with the authorities to whom it is intended to hand over power in British India; but as was explicitly stated by the Cabinet Mission, His Majesty's Government do not intend to hand over their power and obligations under paramountcy to any successor Government. It is not intended to bring paramountcy as a system to a conclusion earlier than the date of the final transfer of power, but you are authorized, at such time as you think appropriate, to enter into negotiations with individual States for adjusting their relations with the Crown.

You will do your best to persuade the rulers of any Indian States in which political progress has been slow to progress rapidly towards some form of more democratic government in their States. You will also aid and assist the States in coming to fair and just arrangements with the leaders of British India as to their future relationships.

The date fixed for the transfer of power is a flexible one to within one month; but you should aim at 1 June, 1948, as the effective date for the transfer of power.

In your relations with the Interim Government you will be guided by the general terms of the Viceroy's letter of 30 May, 1946, to the President of the Congress Party, and of the statement made by the Secretary of State for India in the House of Lords on 13 March, 1947. These statements made it clear that, while the Interim Government would not have the same powers as a Dominion Government, His Majesty's Government would treat the Interim Government with the same consultation and consideration as a Dominion Government, and give it the greatest possible freedom in the day to day exercise of the administration of the country.

It is essential that there should be the fullest co-operation with the Indian leaders in all steps that are taken as to the withdrawal of British power so that the process may go forward as smoothly as possible.

The keynote of your administration should therefore be the closest co-operation with the Indians and you should make it clear to the whole of the Secretary of State's Services that this is so, and that it is their duty to their countries to work to this end.

You should take every opportunity of stressing the importance of ensuring that the transfer of power is effected with full regard to the defence requirements of India. In the first place you will impress upon the Indian leaders the great importance of avoiding any breach in the continuity of the Indian Army and of maintaining the organization of defence on an all India basis. Secondly you will point out the need for continued collaboration in the security of the Indian Ocean area for which provision might be made in an agreement between the two countries. At a suitable date His Majesty's Government would be ready to send military and other experts to India to assist in discussing the terms of such an agreement.

You will no doubt inform Provincial Governors of the substance of this letter.

Yours sincerely
C. Attlee

21. 'Dismissal'

Extracts from Wavell's Diary, 4 January–31 March 1947

Penderel Moon (Ed.), *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 404–34.

4 January

...After Cabinet I had a talk with Matthai, about the most level-headed of all my Ministers. He did not see much day light ahead, agreed that the Congress was very short-sighted in its policy, but said that the chief trouble was personal antagonisms—Nehru versus Liaquat, Patel versus Nehru, Gandhi versus Jinnah. He had no good solution for the present situation, said that Great Britain and India were very closely tied by commercial interest, but that a stable and united India was necessary for this interest to operate, and that he did not see how this could be evolved.

Britter, the Times Correspondent, was my next visitor, a sensible and competent observer. He took a gloomy view of the political situation, thought that the Congress completely lacked any spirit of compromise or generosity, and that their internal dissensions were acute. He said that there was still mistrust of our intentions, that the Services were completely disgruntled and only anxious to go, and that to fix a definite date for our departure was probably the best thing we could do....

6 January

I saw C-in-C this morning. Chief subjects of discussion were the proposal put forward that INA convicts should be released, this we agreed must be resisted; the release of a large number of Junior British officers from the IA and their replacement by Indian officers, which seems inevitable but will obviously weaken the IA, and tend to make it more susceptible to communal influence; the visit of Aung San; and Defence Member's proposal to bring before the Cabinet a recommendation that all British troops should be withdrawn as soon as shipping could be made available, C-in-C had not been consulted on this.

AICC seem to have passed a resolution accepting HMG's statement of 6 December, but as usual with many reservations; and I rather doubt whether it will be enough to bring in the Muslim League.

7 January

I busied myself with consideration of the Breakdown Plan most of the forenoon, and then had 1¼ hours with Liaquat Ali Khan. We had a good deal of discussion about his estimate of the Budget deficit and other financial matters. I then spoke to him about the Congress Resolution, accepting HMG's statement of 6th December and said I very much hoped the Muslim League would now call their Council and come into the Constitution Assembly. He said that it was not a true acceptance by Congress and that they did not really mean to be honest about it; and that we ought to restore our authority and rule India for a further period of years, until the parties agreed. I pointed out that we could not break our pledges to give India self-government at an early date. He said that it would be very wrong to leave India to chaos in this way; but that if we were going to do it we should 'leave fair chaos for both parties', and not remain to establish the Hindus in power.

In the afternoon I saw Rajagopalachari. As usual, he knew nothing very much about the work of his Education Department, but was interesting about affairs in general. He admitted that it might have been better had the Congress acceptance of the Statement of 6 December been quite unequivocal, but stressed their difficulties with their followers, and said that it was only

Nehru's personal efforts which had secured acceptance at all. We discussed Assam's attitude, which he agreed was unnecessarily apprehensive and unrealistic. Finally he mentioned Burma and said rather surprisingly that Burma's political leaders suggested gang leaders to him rather than statesmen—this was in reference to Aung San's visit—and that it was a pity that Burma had ever been separated from India.

Later I saw C-in-C about two proposals by Defence Member—one about withdrawal of British troops, the other about release of INA convicts. Congress are apparently alarmed at Sarat Chandra Bose's assuming leadership of the INA under the mantle of his deceased brother, and think they can appease him by release of the INA convicts (sentenced for murder of cruelty) and restoration of their pay to all of them. The next step would be of course to demand their reinstatement in the Army. I said I should resist any demand for concession to INA.

8 January

Cabinet this morning lasted two and a half hours. It was quite amicable and sensible on the whole. The first item was the Report on the RIN Mutiny, which was accepted with some discussion. The next item on the Coal Report went through peacefully, though Nehru raised the matter of thorium and uranium in Travancore, which might, I thought, have provoked some awkwardness. Proposals for the protection of coated abrasives, whatever they are, and hurricane lanterns, a peculiarly Indian product, presented no difficulty. Liaquat then embarked on a statement in reply to some remarks by Nehru at a previous Cabinet meeting. I was apprehensive that this might provoke a communal riot, but all went well. Liaquat's statement was moderate and sensible; and he and Nehru almost, but not quite, purred at one another.

After lunch I had 45 minutes with Suhrawardy, the Bengal Premier whom I dislike. He was sulky, shifty and unattractive as usual. After a little talk on the Damodar Valley project, which was the ostensible reason for his visit to Delhi, he embarked on his normal hymn of hate against the Hindus, with reference to Bihar; Calcutta and East Bengal had of course been gentlemanly differences of opinion, in his view, compared with the Hindu retaliation in Bihar. He complained that we were strengthening the hands of the Hindus against the Muslims; and drew a most gloomy picture of Bengal after our departure, with Darjeeling annexed by Nepal or Sikkim, or others. I gave him my usual line, that Hindus and Muslims had got to live together in India on some terms and that the sooner they got together to settle them, the better, etc. S. ended by admitting that HMG's statement of 6 December as fair, and that he would recommend to Jinnah that the League should enter the C.A. Jinnah was calling his Working Committee at Karachi for 19 January.

George Abell telegraphed to say that the Cabinet at home has gone back completely and refuses to have anything to do with the Breakdown Plan, so he is returning at once, I thought they well might run out after I had left, they seem quite unable to face an awkward decision.

January 9

A very busy and rather tiresome day. It began with Baldev Singh coming at 10.30 a.m. about the INA. He said that Sarat Chandra Bose was holding an INA meeting in Calcutta on 23 Jan; and that a Resolution would be moved in the Assembly early in February demanding the release of all INA prisoners under sentence;—there are about ten or a dozen, all convicted of murder or cruelty—the payment of INA men of their pay for the time that they were fighting us; and that this was certain to be followed by a demand for their reinstatement in the Army. I naturally reacted very strongly and told him that such action would make it impossible for British officers to continue to serve and would destroy the INA. He promised to put this to the

political leaders, but did not seem very hopeful that they would agree, as they seemed anxious to appease the INA. I then wrote to C-in-C, to see whether he was prepared to stand firm, and arranged to discuss it with him this evening.

After lunch I saw V.P. Menon, who has become rather the mouthpiece of Vallabhai Patel, I fancy. He said he thought the League ought to go into CA but was not hopeful of an agreed Constitution being evolved. He said that Congress leaders were losing popularity and that there were serious internal troubles in Congress and great fear of the Left Wing; and that the danger of labour difficulties was acute. Patel is very annoyed at Nehru for making the appointment of Asaf Ali without consulting his colleagues. Menon also said that Gandhi had proposed a most mischievous resolution about HMG's statement of 6 December, but that Patel had opposed him strongly and was unpopular with G. at present.

Menon was very perturbed at the decline of the Administration—Ministers too busy with politics to pay much attention to their Department; he outlined the chief dangers as Food distribution breaking down, lack of Textiles, Labour troubles, and slowness of the Development plan. I think he was echoing Patel. Finally, he described an interview with Aung San, which had shown that young tough's complete ignorance of financial, constitutional and economic questions.

At 6.30 p.m, I saw C-in-C about the INA problem. He told me that, after consultation with his senior officers, he was determined to stand, up to the point of resignation, on the first issue, the release of the prisoners. We shall have a first-class row with Congress, I expect, but I think we shall get away with it....

Sunday, 12 January

... I had a letter from the PM, telling me that the Cabinet had rejected my plans. The letter was cold, ungracious and indefinite, the letter of a small man. It proposed that I should go home in the near future for further discussions, but I cannot see any value in doing so and shall reply to that effect. It is possible that the idea is to get me home and force my resignation.

13 January

I agreed with the C-in-C to produce a directive on which combined civil and military staff would prepare a plan for a breakdown.

Nehru was due for an interview but did not turn up, an increasingly common habit on the part of my Ministers....

20 January

Most of my day was taken up over an impending crisis about the INA which has been on the horizon for some time. Baldev Singh put up a summary for Cabinet recommending release of all INA men, convicted for brutality or murder, and restoration of pay for the period during which they were serving our enemies. He wanted it taken in Cabinet at once, in order that these concessions might be announced before 23 January, when Sarat Chandra Bose is holding a meeting at Calcutta to assume the mantle of his brother as leader of the INA.

I saw C-in-C at 10.30 a.m. and found he was still firm on the matter, he said he was determined to resign sooner than acquiesce in the proposals about the INA.

So, I wrote a note on Baldev's summary for Cabinet and told George to draft a telegram to S. of S. to warn him of the approaching crisis. I believe myself that if we all stand firm—HMG, C-in-C, myself—my Cabinet will not force the issue and they may even be encouraged to stand up to the Left Wing—J.P. Narain and Bose.

Ghazanfar Ali was my visitor in the afternoon. He is the worst representative of the League in the Cabinet (except Mandal)—intensely communal and rather stupid. He seemed completely hazy about Pakistan and its implications, and admitted that he did not understand the economy of it. I find him rather a trial, inside and outside the Cabinet.

Arthur Henderson dined, he is off tomorrow, having made no progress at all in his Mission, but having perhaps learnt a little about India.

21 January

Ian Scott had some political gossip out riding this morning. Menon, who is now very much in Patel's pocket, claims to have seen a letter from Gandhi to Patel, abusing him for supporting acceptance of HMG's statement of 6 December, which G. had wished to reject. I have always regarded G. as our most inveterate, malignant and rather hypocritical enemy. Ian also had a story of an interview between Sultan Ahmed and Nehru, in which S.A. had intimated that the passing of N.'s Republic Resolution in the C.A. might make it difficult for the Princes to negotiate. According to the story, N. had blown up into one of his outbursts and said he did not care a damn for the Princes, to which S.A. had replied that the princes did not care a damn for him.

I spent some of the morning over a telegram to the S. of S. to warn him of the INA Crisis.

Azad came after lunch. He had one or two small matters on his Department; then spoke of the relations between the communities and advocated improvement in social contacts between the Members of the Cabinet. He is in favour of Coalition Governments in all Provinces, but says that it is no use to approach the subject unless the atmosphere at the Centre improves. I asked him about Nehru's Republic Resolution and he thinks it will be passed, though he sees the danger of doing so, and has advised against it, I gather.

Earlier Arthur Henderson had come to say goodbye. He had breakfasted with Nehru, who was very worried, he said, over the possibility of serious labour troubles and apprehended a railway and coal strike. N. made the usual complaint of non-cooperation on the part of the League members of the Cabinet. Henderson said he would recommend to Cabinet that the sooner the S. of S. Services were wound up the better.

Three-hour meeting of Cabinet 4–7 p.m. The matter of a Press Ordinance for the Commissioner Provinces, that is, Delhi for all practical purposes, took nearly one and a half hours, though it had been twice before Cabinet already. The Muslim League is convinced that it is simply a device of Patel's to muzzle Dawn, and they may have some reason for apprehension. I think, however, that the stand they have made may protect them to some extent.

The rest of the proceedings were less controversial, though the communal element obtruded itself. The League members do not show up well in Cabinet discussions, except Liaquat, who always talks good sense. Chundrigar is slow and dull, Nishtar loquacious and not very clever, Ghazanfar always communal and pugnacious. Congress can always make dialectical rings round them and appear reasonable and moderate....

Thursday, 23rd January

Interview with Khizar who, if his heart was really in it, would be the best leader of the Muslims in India, but he does not like politics and would prefer to be out of it all.

Mandal who succeeded him is the poorest Member I have ever had in the Government, and I find great difficulty in understanding his English.

I had a telegram from S. of S. to say that HMG would support me over the INA question, which was quite a pleasant surprise. I also had a telegram suggesting that I should go home again for discussions, which seems quite unnecessary.

I discussed with C-in-C at 6 p.m. the line to take at the conference which has been arranged tomorrow with Nehru, Liaquat and Baldev on the INA question....

Thursday, 30th January

Day began with Hutchings who is just off to London on food matters. We are all right for rice for the moment but very short of wheat. On the general situation, H. said he thought there was a section of Congress, and Gandhi himself, who did not really want a peaceful hand over but to claim that they had ejected the British by force; perhaps there is something in this....

1 February

The Muslim League Resolution seems to shut the door completely on their participation in the Constituent Assembly and creates a difficult and perhaps an ugly situation. I decided to send for Nehru and discuss it with him this evening....

I saw Vallabhai Patel, who was more silent and restrained than usual, and obviously did not wish to discuss the political situation, though I gave him an opening. We spoke of the Bihar Government's reluctance to reserve places in the Provincial service for ex-service men, on which Patel promised to help; and a number of other matters. He was friendly and sensible.

In the evening I saw Nehru for half an hour. I said that the League resolution created a very difficult situation, both for the Constituent Assembly and the Central Government. There was of course no question of HMG going back on their policy or dissolving the C.A.; but it was obvious that the C.A. without the League and possibly without the States could not make an acceptable constitution for the whole of India. As to the Central Government, the Congress was in a position to force the resignation of the Muslim League members, but they would be well advised to consider the matter very carefully; since the Muslim League inactive opposition might make the administration of the country even more difficult than now. The crisis had come at an unfortunate time, just as the Budget session of the Assembly was beginning. Nehru was subdued and obviously realized the seriousness of the position. He said that the C.A. would go on, but obviously could not force a constitution on unwilling provinces. He hoped that the States, or at least a proportion of them, would join the C.A. As to the Cabinet, the matter would require serious consideration. Apart from the fact that the League had not joined the C.A., the policy of the Party, unless the Bombay decision last July were withdrawn, was direct action, that is, active opposition to the Government of which they at present formed part. He would consult his colleagues and give me his views.

In the evening I got one of the S. of S. panic-stricken cables, deploring any initiative on my part in seeing Nehru. Too late, anyhow, and it would not have influenced me, I think, even if it had come earlier....

6 February

As I had expected I had a letter this morning signed by all the Congress members of my Cabinet demanding the resignation of the Muslim League members. I wired it to HMG, it crossed a telegram from S. of S. asking me to 'gain time' if the Congress did put forward such a demand. But they will not be able to put off a decision for long, and I do not see quite how the Congress demand can be resisted.

V.P. Menon, whom I saw this afternoon, usually so optimistic, was gloomy about the position and thinks that the partition of India is now inevitable. He says the League reckon on this, and expect to capture the Punjab Government soon.

8 February

Cabinet meeting again went quite smoothly. The main item was the strength of the post-war Indian Army. It became clear that India could afford not much more than half the annual amount that Defence Department had originally asked for. At the end of an hour's discussion I undertook to draw up a draft directive to the Defence Department to make plans for a smaller Army. We then considered the formal statement of the Budget figures, showing a deficit of 60 to 80 crores. Finally we passed the draft Air Agreement with the Dutch.

This morning I drew up the draft directive for the Defence Department and later discussed it with the C-in-C. We also spoke of the proposal to release the INA convicts on which he still remains firm; and plans for an emergency withdrawal of Europeans. I told him of the PM's letter and my removal, since he was off on a week's tour and I did not want him to learn of it by a Press announcement; he seemed very upset.

I had a telegram from HMG in the evening, with reference to the Congress request for the removal of the League members from the Government. As usual, it was indefinite, but HMG apparently contemplates making an early statement about the termination of our rule....

11 February

I had nearly an hour with Nehru. I threw a fly over him on the matter of trying to get the League into the Constituent Assembly and keeping them in the government, but he did not rise. He seemed subdued.

Later Baldev came. His chief point was on the release of the INA convicts. The Resolution comes up in the Assembly on the 18th and he wanted the matter taken in Cabinet. I said I should have to over-rule the Cabinet, if they decided on release, and he said he would consult his colleagues. He then discussed the political situation and said that Jinnah did not want a settlement. He had had discussions with him in London but had got nowhere, and Jinnah offered no assurances to the Sikhs even if they supported Pakistan....

13 February

In the afternoon I had a talk with Matthai, who is always sensible and interesting. He deplored the leadership both of Gandhi and of Jinnah, but like all other moderates in India seemed to accept them as inevitable evils, whose influence could not be opposed.

In the evening I saw Nazimuddin about the Punjab situation, at the request of Evan Jenkins in a telegram. N. was moderate and quite willing for compromise, if the Punjab Government would make concessions over political meetings and processions. I like honest fat little Nazimuddin and wish Jinnah had put him in the Government. He told me something of the Karachi meeting, I think he may have been for joining the C.A. himself.

A longish telegram from the PM, to say that they propose to make an announcement next week on India and include the change of Viceroy; and that Dickie Mountbatten had been appointed. An unexpected appointment but a clever one from their point of view; and Dickie's personality may perhaps accomplish what I have failed to do.

14 February

Of my visitors, the first were two representatives of a big British business firm, and left on me the impression that British business-men in India have not moved with the times; their chief

plea was that they should still have, after the transfer of power, their own settlements, their own clubs and should in fact keep themselves to themselves.

After lunch I saw Jagjivan Ram, who was comparatively optimistic on the Labour troubles; but pessimistic on the political situation. He said that a fresh effort by HMG was required, and that the departure of the League from the Interim Government was no solution (why then did he sign the Congress letter demanding it? These Indians have no political courage).

Big dinner party in evening in Banqueting Hall, the last I shall hold there....

17 February

I sent a telegram to HMG urging them to postpone their main announcement, and merely to announce on Thursday my replacement, their views on the differences between Congress and League, making a last effort to bring them together into the C.A. (though I do not think it will succeed), and if possible some decision about the Services. I said that I thought it was only fair on my successor to let him have a week or two to study the situation before the final date was announced; and on me that I should not have the responsibility in my final weeks of office of carrying out a policy which I thought mis-judged and ill-timed.

I saw C-in-C again, at his normal interview, and he produced a gloomy view of the results of the announcement the gist of which I cabled home.

Patel was pleasant, and we discussed a variety of matters; the slowness of HMG in dealing with the question of the Services; the situation in the Punjab; Pakistan, he was quite prepared to let the Muslims have the Western Punjab, and Sind and NWFP if they wished to join, and eastern Bengal; the question of language on the AIR; the enquiries into the Calcutta and Bihar riots, he agreed with me that these enquiries were too late and too long and that any enquiry should be immediate and short.

In the evening I discussed the Budget proposals with Liaquat, Nehru and Matthai; all went well, the meeting was amicable and the proposals were accepted.

18 February

One of my visitors was Hutchings, just back from London who had had interview with S. of S. and PM. He regarded P-L as completely useless and dithering, and could get no sense or decision out of him over shipping or the services. The whole attitude of the Cabinet to India was conditioned, as I found last December, not by any consideration of what was good or expedient in India, but by what they could put across in Parliament. Also they were thinking not about India about coal, electricity and Palestine.

19 February

HMG telegraphed adhering to their announcement; and also sent a long telegram of self-justification and accusation of myself as inconsistent, to which I think I can make an effective reply....

I spent the afternoon working on papers. Cabinet meeting in the evening lasted two and a quarter hours, but was very friendly. There was one very contentious item, the amalgamation of the External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations Departments, and the transfer of the High Commissioner in London from the Commerce to the External Affairs Department, but I managed to skate round the really contentious part—very skillfully, George Abell said. The other items—tariffs on bicycles and woodscrews, regulation of dentists, note by Nehru on Scientific Manpower, Land Requisition went almost hilariously. They are curious people, these Indians.

Late in the evening I was told that there had been leakage in London and the Press obviously had had the text of the Statement and the name of my successor.

Thursday, 20th February....

In the evening I had short interviews with Nehru and Liaquat and handed them HMG's statement. Liaquat seemed to be genuinely sorry that I was going, and Nehru was polite....

23 February

I had quite a cordial telegram from the PM in reply to one I had sent deprecating any party controversy over my removal. I have had nice letters from Rajagopalachari, Azad and Nehru about my work.

26 February

Baldev Singh had no knowledge of Sikh reactions to HMG's statement, since he had been away, but said that the rift between Sikhs and Muslim League was wider than ever. He was perturbed at the idea of all British officers leaving I.A. in a year's time. He said nothing about the INA resolution, I am told that it has been postponed till April; I thought we should get away with it if we stood firm.

Cabinet meeting this evening. One would certainly never imagine from the atmosphere of friendly discussion that each side was demanding the withdrawal of the other; nor that they were likely to initiate a civil war.

27 February

Rajendra Prasad thought it was blowing up for another food crisis; and unfortunately at the same time our control over the Provinces and the Provinces' control over procurement and distribution is weakening, owing to the general preference for politics over administration.

In the afternoon I had three-quarters of an hour with Dr Matthai, practically all on the general political situation and Indian mentality. He does not think that the Muslim League will come in, mainly because of Jinnah's personality and of the Congress arrogance in 1937-39, which persuaded the Muslims that they would never get a fair deal. He said that the Hindu did not naturally lack generosity, but that the Congress was swayed by the 'Gujarati mentality' of the leaders, that is, that of a trader driving a hard bargain.

28 February

From an exchange of telegrams with London I learn that Mountbatten may arrive in Delhi on 22 March and that I shall leave next day. M-B has also wired that he will keep on the whole of the Personal Staff at any rate for the next three months.

We had a Cabinet meeting at 10.30 a.m. to hear the Budget proposals. They went down quite well. Rajagopalachari was rather talkative, but otherwise there was not much question. George says the Budget is a clever one, in that it drives a wedge between Congress and their rich merchant supporters, like Birla, while Congress cannot object to its provisions; but I doubt whether Liaquat had any deliberate intention of doing this, I think he took the advice of his officials, which I think was sound.

I saw Liaquat for a few minutes after the meeting, about the date for M-B's arrival. He said the League would certainly not have taken a decision by then, that Jinnah was sick man and would not be in Delhi before the middle of the month at the latest.

After lunch I talked with Jagjivan Ram, whom I like and think the most sensible of the Scheduled Castes I have met. He said that HMG's Statement threw the S.C. to the mercy of

the Majority Communities; that they would miss British protection and British justice and would have preferred that we should remain for another 10 years or so; but admitted the difficulties....

10 March

After a quiet Sunday I had a fairly busy day. I saw C-in-C, who was rather depressed about the Indian Army.

I then said goodbye to J.P. Srivastava, he always had rather more character and guts than most of my Executive Council, though I fancy his business methods may have been shrewd rather than scrupulous.

Then I saw Nehru, who was quite friendly. He agreed that the Cabinet Mission Plan was the best solution if it could be carried through; and that the only real alternative was the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. He was quite sober and realistic in what he said, but did not seem really hopeful of a settlement with the League. When I said that I hoped my successor would succeed where I had failed, in bringing the two Parties together, he said that failures and successes were only relative and that some failures were greater than successes....

12 March

Council (I beg its pardon, Cabinet) went quite smoothly and in a friendly atmosphere.

Meanwhile things go badly in the Punjab.

13 March

Hutchings came to say goodbye. He was gloomy about the Food situation, as there seems to be a world shortage, and the harvests in India do not promise too well, as the wheat in Central India has been ruined by rust. We had a long general talk. He does not think that many of the Services will stop in India after June 1948. He agrees with many of the better men in the Services that the Compensation claim is wrong but that Government should find employment for the Indian Services. He says that in England all the employees on Railways and others are asking for compensation on being nationalised. We discussed Indian mentality and character, Hindu and Muslim and the future of India. Hutchings is one of the ablest ICS men I have had under me.

After lunch Evan Jenkins who had been to Rohtak, came in. He was as calm and clear as usual, but took a serious view of the Punjab situation. The cities are more or less under control but the trouble in rural areas is spreading and is of course more difficult to check. He has no idea of what casualties yet are, but there may be a total of 1000 killed in the whole Province. The trouble in getting any settlement is that both the Congress and Muslim League are controlled from outside, from Delhi and Bombay; while the Sikhs, who are in a position to negotiate on the spot, are disunited and poorly led, Master Tara Singh is stupid and emotional. The local Muslim League leaders are poor: Mamdot is hopelessly stupid and Firoz Khan Noon is trusted by no-one and cuts no ice. Khizar's resignation was prompted largely by the Statement of 20 February.

Evan wants an extra brigade of troops from the South. He is rather afraid of the trouble taking an anti-European turn, and thinks it possible that we may be forced to evacuate the Punjab before the rest of India—just the reverse of what my plan proposed. I told him of Nehru's proposal to visit the Punjab, which he did not like but said could not be prevented: Baldev's visit had done more harm than good.

At 3.30 p.m. Nehru came in and we had about 40 minutes talk. N. began by recrimination against the methods of the Muslim League; Evan pointed out that they had used exactly the

technique practiced by the Congress in their agitations of 1921 and 1930. He also said that the trouble at Amritsar had been started by non-Muslims. Nehru showed signs of working up for one of his outbursts but the unruffled calm and incontrovertible statements of Evan kept him in check. No Conclusion was reached, but N. gave the programme of his visit. He said nothing about going to Peshawar, and I hoped he had abandoned this idea, but I gathered later in the evening that he still might go there.

In the evening Burrows arrived, he had come up to say goodbye, a little reproachful that I had not gone to Calcutta. He was gloomy about prospects in Bengal, did not think that there was much hope of its holding together, unless he could get a Coalition Ministry in the next six months, and he saw little chance of that. He said that Suhrwardy was a very frightened man, that he was almost the only Indian politician he knew capable of taking a long view, but that he was a cad and untrustworthy. Burrows liked what he had seen of Liaquat. We had some discussion of all-India politics and agreed that the personalities of Gandhi and Jinnah had been the determining factors in preventing a solution of the Indian problem. He was very relieved that G. had left Bengal, it had taken 20 of his best police to protect him; and he was sarcastic over an American correspondent's article headed 'Gandhi walks alone'!

Burrows is a really sterling character, the best type of Englishman we breed; and I think he was genuinely sorry at my departure.

14 March

I sent a message to Nehru asking him not to go to Peshawar and he agreed though protestingly. I think this will relieve Olaf Caroe's mind.

15 March

The President of the Council of State, Hossain Imam, came ostensibly to say goodbye, but occupied 15 minutes by a hymn of hate against Congress, especially on the score of lack of generosity to Muslims; this is of course true and is where Congress have shown such short-sightedness, they could have appeased the Muslims without really giving away anything essential for the good of India or their cause, but they have the mentality of the small lawyer who will hold on to the smallest point of his argument and, of the bania who will not give up one anna of his bargain.

Spens, Chief Justice, came to say goodbye and we had a long talk. He says that the Calcutta Enquiry will show that there was Hindu incitement and a sudden and concerted attack without provocation on the Muslims in the north of Calcutta; that the Ministry will come out of it all right; that there was delay in bringing in the military owing to faulty information; and that Bucher and the military were magnificent when called in.

17 March

Claude Auchinleck came for his last official interview. He certainly regrets the change. He says he can get no decisions from Baldev Singh who is always away on political tours and anyway is afraid to give decisions by himself.

Then came Patel. We discussed the appointment of a DIB, vice Smith Patel wants to put in an Indian ICS man on the grounds that there is no Indian policeman good enough (actually there is a good Muslim but Patel will not have him and he will not serve under Patel). I said that it would be bad for police morale if the plum appointment in the IP went to an outsider. P. took the usual communal line about the Punjab and accused the officials and police, who are mainly Muslim, of bias. He had written to me advocating martial law, but I explained to

him the disadvantages. We then got on to the Budget against which he declaimed very hotly; it has obviously got Birla and 'Big Business', with whom P. works closely, very much on the raw, and they are using every means to get it amended. P. wants the whole Budget taken again in Cabinet, I said we must wait now for the Select Committee's report. Patel was very friendly at the finish and we have always dealt on frank terms and have respected one another. He is entirely communal and has no sense of compromise or generosity towards Moslems, but he is more of a man than most of these Hindu politicians.

The vanguard of Mountbatten's large staff turned up.

18 March

I fell behind all the time today and never got abreast of the work. There was a continual succession of files and visitors.

I had a long talk with Liaquat mainly about the Budget. He said that it would have been perfectly easy for Nehru to come and see him if the Congress wished to propose any modifications in the Budget. The fact was that Big business, headed by Birla and Dalmia, had got at the Congress High Command; and that instead of coming to him direct they had intrigued behind his back in the Select Committee. Actually he had now carried his proposals through the Select Committee with some modifications of the Business Profits Tax.

I have always liked Liaquat and thought him full of common sense, but he has no use for Hindus. Still if he had been in Jinnah's place I think we could have got a solution.

Azad spent most of his interview after lunch about the records of the Political Department. Congress have an idea that we are destroying all inconvenient or compromising files about the States and our relations with them, and want to try and have a finger in the matter...

In the evening I saw Matthai, the ablest and most impartial of my Ministers. We talked mainly of the Budget, I think he really approves the proposals and realizes the difficulties Congress is in, if they back Birla and Co, but he had to put across the party line of modification of the proposals. On the question of British withdrawal he was gloomy on the future prospects of India, but said our real mistakes began 40 years ago, especially with Curzon's bureaucratic centralization and worship of efficiency, instead of putting Indian gradually into the saddle and accepting a lower standard of efficiency.

19 March

I had one of Nehru's rather intemperate letters on my request to him not to go to Peshawar; it ended with a demand for the resignation of the Governor. I sent a soothing reply and said nothing about his demand with regard to the Governor.

Cabinet meeting in the evening began with the INA case. I saved discussion on it by saying that I assumed that Cabinet supported the demand for the release of the prisoners; and when they assented I announced my intention to over-rule my Cabinet for the first time in my Viceroyalty, at what will probably be my last Cabinet meeting. Only Mandal tried to start an argument on the merits of the case, and I stopped him. Nehru said that my decision would have serious consequences but on the whole they took it quite well. After that we got through quite a lot of business.

20 March

A day of farewells and packing. Two Nepalese generals came to give me a farewell message from the Maharaja of Nepal.

Then Mandal gave me a half-hour discourse on the disabilities of the Scheduled Castes, their regret that the British are going and their fears for the future. It was all on the usual lines; but Mandal spoke with obvious sincerity and showed up better than at previous interviews when I have found him tiresome. I think part of his trouble is that his command of English is poor. And he is not clever.

Little V.P. came in the afternoon. He has always been an admirer of mine, I think, and regrets my going. Always an optimist, he thinks the budget dispute will be settled by Liaquat giving way. He gets this from Patel, I expect.

In the evening a farewell party for the staff, about 300, I don't think I have ever properly realized the size of the Vice-regal household. Then Mavlankar, President of the Legislative Assembly, and his wife came in to say goodbye, quite a gesture I think from a very confirmed Congress man.

Finally a farewell dinner-party to the Cabinet, which went quite well. Nehru was quite genial and talkative; he is apt sometimes to be silent and aloof at these gatherings. I gathered from Liaquat that compromise on the Budget is possible.

22 March

My last day. A good turn-out for the last morning ride from HauzKhas, 12 of the Personal Staff, Felicity and the Policemen.

Ismay, Mieville and some of M-B's staff turned up for lunch and I had about an hour with Pug Ismay and Mieville after lunch. They do not seem really to know very much about it or to have any very new or definite policy.

Then came the ceremonial arrival of the M-B's, the Bodyguard in full dress looked well and he was very pleased with them.

I talked with Dickie M-B from about 4.30 p.m. to 7 p.m. He began by telling me that the PM had sent for him and asked him to take on the job either before or at the time I left England last December. So that Attlee's assurances at that time and subsequent letters were completely insincere. He said that Attlee had been quite moved by my telegram assuring him that I had no intention to make trouble for the Government and was well disposed.

He then talked of the INA, having in mind apparently to reduce the sentences of those serving sentences for brutality as 'part of a political gesture'. He also proposed to write to Gandhi and Jinnah to ask them to come and see him, one more Viceroy, I suppose, who hopes to reconcile these intractable personalities. He seems to have succeeded in getting compensation for the Services, thanks partly, I think, to my cables to him not to come out without settling this.

He also talked of his hope of getting India to accept some form of Dominion status.

At 7.15 p.m. I saw Liaquat about the Budget crisis. He was prepared to consider the compromise I suggested, but only to prevent my success or from the embarrassment of a contentious Cabinet meeting at once, and provided Congress agreed to support all other Budget proposals, otherwise he would fight out the battle in the Assembly and 'I am on a strong wicket', as I think he is. We parted on very friendly terms. I like Liaquat and have a high opinion of him.

We dined alone with the Mountbattens. After dinner Pug Ismay, Mieville and George Abell came in and we talked politics for about an hour and a half.

27 March (Claridges Hotel)

The departure ceremony from Delhi on 23rd went off all right. The M-B's contrary to precedent came to the airfield to see us off, which was friendly. On arriving at Karachi, I paid a short visit to the 2nd Bn., (Black Watch) and we then flew on and got to Habbaniyah at 11.30 p.m. and stayed at the A.O.C.'s house. Next day we flew on to Rome, arriving about 4 p.m. local time. Next day (25th), we spent most of the morning at the Vatican, mainly in the Sistine Chapel, and took off at 11.45 a.m. We got to North-holt at about 4 p.m. P-L, A.V. Alexander met me from the Government, Cripps sent the excuse of pressing business. At Joyce's pressing request I said a few innocuous words to the press, very haltingly. We then went off to Claridges where the Government had booked us a suite for 10 days.

The only thing I have to record from the India angle in the next few days is a talk with one of my staff. He said that there had been a leak from P.S.V.'s office; that George Abell's Indian stenographer, whom he trusted absolutely though I had once or twice questioned the advisability of trusting any Indian with really secret stuff, had been passing copies of George's letters out to Congress; that Nehru had brought some home and showed them to Cripps as evidence that my staff was at heart biased against Congress; and that this was largely responsible for my dismissal. Now if there is any truth in this, it does show an amazing mentality on the part of the Cabinet Ministers concerned. Instead of warning P.S.V. or myself of the leakage; and, if they considered that the letters which were produced showed disloyalty to HMG's policy on the part of P.S.V., or myself, confronting us with them and asking for an explanation, they allow the leakage of secret correspondence to go on or at least fail to warn us—and make arrangements to replace me more or less at Nehru's bidding. 'Politics is a dishonest business', R.A.B. Butler said to me in 1943. It certainly does change the ethical code of men who would, I suppose regard themselves normally as men of honesty and principle. I am glad that I have finished with politics.

28 March

I went round to Downing Street this morning by request to meet the India Committee—PM, Cripps, Alexander, P-L, Listowel, Addison. They questioned me for about 40 minutes in a rather routine and perfunctory fashion, as if they knew all the answers already. Towards the end the S. of S. said: 'Is there any general advice you can give us on how to proceed?' I said that I had given them advice and that they had not liked it, that they had presumably given my successor full instructions, and that anything that I was likely to say could hardly have any influence. For what it was worth, however, I could only recommend them to make a last effort to bring the Parties together, and if that failed, as it seemed likely to do, to start on detailed arrangements for the partition of India, so as to avoid confusion when we leave, and in the hope that there may be some last-minute arrangement about Defence and others. Shortly afterwards the PM said: 'Well, thank you, that is all, I think', and bowed me out without one single word of thanks or commendation. He is a singularly ungracious person. I had no desire for an insincere little speech and was glad to be spared it, but it was not a good exhibition of manners.

31 March

I think I had better close this record of my time in India at this point. I had a talk on India with BobbetyCranborne today, and he said that it was a great pity that HMG had not taken my advice and consulted the Opposition of Indian affairs. The Lords had always found it almost impossible to extract information about India from P-L, who was vague or evasive in

his replies. This was one of the reasons why they had intended to press the debate in the Lords to a division. It was the speech of Halifax that had led them to re-consider the decision.

R.A.B. Butler said that my final broadcast had created great impression, and was simple and dignified.

I dined with Monty, who talked mainly about forthcoming Conference, Spearhead.

I am not going to attempt any summary here of my Viceroyalty. My last letter to the King was something in the nature of that. Whether I shall ever have the time or inclination to go through all these journals again and comment on them, I am rather doubtful. I think I have always been honest in the entries and have tried to represent accurately the events, discussions and impressions of the time. Perhaps they may be of interest to my family, or to some future historian many years hence. It has been interesting to write them down though rather a burden at times....

Chapter 5. Statement of 20 February 1947 and Its Aftermath

1. Declaration on Indian Policy

Text of His Majesty's Government's Statement, 20 February 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 773–5.

1. It has long been the policy of successive British Governments to work towards the realization of self-government in India. In pursuance of this policy an increasing measure of responsibility has been devolved on Indians and to-day the civil administration and the Indian Armed Forces rely to a very large extent on Indian civilians and officers. In the constitutional field the Acts of 1919 and 1935 passed by the British Parliament each represented a substantial transfer of political power. In 1940 the Coalition Government recognized the principle that Indians should themselves frame a new constitution for a fully autonomous India, and in the offer of 1942 they invited them to set up a Constituent Assembly for this purpose as soon as the war was over.
2. His Majesty's Government believe this policy to have been right and in accordance with sound democratic principles. Since they came into office, they have done their utmost to carry it forward to its fulfilment. The declaration of the Prime Minister of 15th March last which met with general approval in Parliament and the country, made it clear that it was for the Indian people themselves to choose their future status and constitution and that in the opinion of His Majesty's Government the time had come for responsibility for the Government of India to pass into Indian hands.
3. The Cabinet Mission which was sent to India last year spent over three months in consultation with Indian leaders in order to help them to agree upon a method for determining the future constitution of India, so that the transfer of power might be smoothly and rapidly effected. It was only when it seemed clear that without some initiative from the Cabinet Mission agreement was unlikely to be reached that they put forward proposals themselves.
4. These proposals, made public in May last, envisaged that the future constitution of India should be settled by a Constituent Assembly composed, in the manner suggested therein, of representatives of all communities and interests in British India and of the Indian States.
5. Since the return of the Mission an Interim Government has been set up at the Centre composed of the political leaders of the major communities exercising wide powers within the existing constitution. In all the Provinces Indian Governments responsible to Legislatures are in office.

6. It is with great regret that His Majesty's Government find that there are still differences among Indian Parties which are preventing the Constituent Assembly from functioning as it was intended that it should. It is of the essence of the plan that the Assembly should be fully representative.
7. His Majesty's Government desire to hand over their responsibility to authorities established by a constitution approved by all parties in India in accordance with the Cabinet Mission's plan, but unfortunately there is at present no clear prospect that such a constitution and such authorities will emerge. The present state of uncertainty is fraught with danger and cannot be indefinitely prolonged. His Majesty's Government wish to make it clear that it is their definite intention to take the necessary steps to effect the transference of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948.
8. This great sub-continent now containing over 400 million people has for the last century enjoyed peace and security as a part of the British Commonwealth and Empire. Continued peace and security are more than ever necessary to-day if the full possibilities of economic development are to be realized and a higher standard of life attained by the Indian people.
9. His Majesty's Government are anxious to hand over their responsibilities to a Government which, resting on the sure foundation of the support of the people, is capable of maintaining peace and administering India with justice and efficiency. It is therefore essential that all parties should sink their differences in order that they may be ready to shoulder the great responsibilities which will come upon them next year.
10. After months of hard work by the Cabinet Mission a great measure of agreement was obtained as to the method by which a constitution should be worked out. This was embodied in their statements of May last. His Majesty's Government there agreed to recommend to Parliament a constitution worked out, in accordance with the proposals made therein, by a fully representative Constituent Assembly. But if it should appear that such a constitution will not have been worked out by a fully representative Assembly before the time mentioned in paragraph 7, His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over, on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of central Government for British India or in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments, or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people.
11. Although the final transfer of authority may not take place until June 1948, preparatory measures must be put in hand in advance. It is important that the efficiency of the civil administration should be maintained and that the defence of India should be fully provided for. But inevitably, as the process of transfer proceeds, it will become progressively more difficult to carry out to the letter all the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935. Legislation will be introduced in due course to give effect to the final transfer of power.
12. In regard to the Indian States, as was explicitly stated by the Cabinet Mission, His Majesty's Government do not intend to hand over their powers and obligations under paramountcy to any Government of British India. It is not intended to bring paramountcy, as a system, to a conclusion earlier than the date of the final transfer

of power, but it is contemplated that for the intervening period the relations of the Crown with individual States may be adjusted by agreement.

13. His Majesty's Government will negotiate agreements in regard to matters arising out of the transfer of power with the representatives of those to whom they propose to transfer power.
14. His Majesty's Government believe that British commercial and industrial interests in India can look forward to a fair field for their enterprise under the new conditions. The commercial connection between India and the United Kingdom has been long and friendly, and will continue to be to their mutual advantage.
15. His Majesty's Government cannot conclude this statement without expressing on behalf of the people of this country their goodwill and good wishes towards the people of India as they go forward to this final stage in their achievement of self-government. It will be the wish of everyone in these islands that, notwithstanding constitutional changes, the association of the British and Indian peoples should not be brought to an end; and they will wish to continue to do all that is in their power to further the well-being of India.

2. 'Attlee Threatens India with Partition'

Daily Worker, 21 February 1947.

A GRAVE threat of multiple partition for India was the central feature of a major statement of Government policy by Mr Attlee in the House of Commons yesterday. It was accompanied by the news that Viceroy is to be changed. Lord Wavell is going in March and Lord Mountbatten will take over. It was followed by a spectacular 'row' between Mr Attlee and Mr Churchill, who was trying to get the Premier to give reasons for Wavell's removal. At the end of the uproar, Mr Attlee and Mr Churchill left the Chamber amicably together.

TRANSFER OF POWER

Mr Attlee's announcement proclaimed that the Government intended to take the necessary steps to 'effect the transference of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June, 1948.'

Then followed the passages of his statement which defined what this, practically speaking meant. The Government said Mr Attlee, had 'agreed to recommend to Parliament a Constitution worked out by a fully representative Constitutive Assembly.

'But if it should appear that such a Constitution would not have been worked out by a fully representative Assembly before the time mentioned[June, 1948], His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the central Government in British India should be handed over on the due date.'

They would consider, said Mr Attlee, whether these powers should be handed 'as a whole to some form of central government for British India or in some areas to the existing provincial governments or in such other way as may seem most reasonable in the best interests of the Indian people.'

PRINCES REMAIN

Mr Attlee declared the Government had no intention of 'handing over India to chaos.' As for the Indian States, he repeated the well-known fact that 'His Majesty's Government do not

intend to hand over their powers and obligations under paramountcy to any Government of British India.

'The relations of the Crown with the individual States may be adjusted by agreements.' Mr Gallacher (Com. West File) succeeded in asking above the uproar which followed the statement whether any Labour or trade union leader had been considered for the Viceroy's position when a change became necessary.

'DIVIDE AND RULE' STILL THE POLICY

The Government's policy statement foreshadows policy of 'divide and rule' carried to the limit.

Mr Attlee makes it clear that when he talks of transfer of 'power' to 'responsible Indian hands' he does not mean transfer of full power to a central Indian Government. On the contrary, he underlined in his statement the probability that 'power' will be transferred piecemeal, some to a central Government, some to 'existing Provincial Governments.'

This, there seems little doubt, means that certain Provincial Governments would in fact be raised to a status equal—in terms of 'power'—with the Central Government.

REBUFF TO CONGRESS

This type of 'patchwork partition' clearly increases the significance of the already familiar determination to preserve the powers of the Princes and of the British Governments in relation to them.

The announcement is a direct rebuff to Congress and will certainly increase the hopes of Moslem 'separatism'.

It is generally believed that the removal of Lord Wavell and his replacement by Lord Mountbatten—who is regarded as expert in the workings of 'the new imperialism'—is due to the belief that Lord Wavell was politically too closely implicated with the Congress.

He is stated to have made certain verbal commitments which must now be thrown over making it impossible for him to maintain his position.

3. Nehru Denies Any Role in Change of Viceroyalty

Nehru's Statement to the Press, 22 February 1947

SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 43-4.

A news agency report published on Saturday morning purporting to emanate from a source close to me is unjust both to Lord Wavell and to me¹. Regarding our reactions to Prime Minister Attlee's statement, my colleagues and I will no doubt express our views. What has been stated in the news agency report is likely to mislead opinion. What I am concerned about specially, however, are the references to Lord Wavell and to Lord Mountbatten. There have been differences of opinion during the past months, but I have never doubted Lord Wavell's sincerity and desire to serve India's interests. He has carried a heavy burden and has worked hard. I have a high regard for him and I shall be sorry in many ways to part with him.

I met Lord Mountbatten during my brief visit to Singapore last year and he was very courteous to me. I met him once again as he was passing through Delhi to discuss certain matters relating to the transport of paddy from Java to India. These are the only two meetings I have had with him so far.

I regret that unauthorized and often incorrect speculations should be made at a time when we have to face a new situation which requires the fullest consideration.

¹ The appointment of Lord Mountbatten as the new Viceroy of India was announced on 20 February 1947, simultaneously with the statement on Indian policy. A report of the Associated Press of America, published on 22 February, accredited a source close to Nehru with holding the view that the change in Viceroyalty was 'a move to placate Pandit Nehru, who has long been known to regard Lord Wavell as an obstruction to a settlement with the Muslim League'. The report also said that Mountbatten and Nehru had become personal friends during the latter's visit to Singapore in March 1946

4. 'Nehru Welcomes HMG's Statement: "A Wise and Courageous Decision"'

The Hindustan Times, 23 February 1947.

HOPE OF PEACEFUL TRANSITION

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Vice-President of the Interim Government, in a statement, issued on Saturday night commends the British Government's White Paper on India as 'a wise and courageous one' and says that the work of the Constituent Assembly must now be carried on with greater speed.

Pandit Nehru adds: 'In this great work we invite afresh all those who have kept aloof and we ask all to be partners in this joint and historic undertaking, casting aside fear and suspicion, which ill become a great people on the eve of freedom.'

The following is the text of Pandit Nehru's statement:

The statement made by Prime Minister, Mr Clement Attlee, in the House of Commons on 20th February, in regard to Indian policy has received and is receiving the earnest attention of all those who are vitally interested in bringing the present transitional period to a satisfactory conclusion.

The statement is obscure in some places and requires careful consideration. The outstanding feature of it, however, is the decision of the British Government to transfer power to Indian hands not later than June 1948. It has further been stated that preparatory measures must be put in hand in advance. This is important, as only thus can be secured a rapid and effective transference of power within this period.

My colleagues and I are giving the fullest thought to this statement, and early next month the Congress Working Committee will meet and give its considered views on the new situation that has arisen.

'CHALLENGE TO ALL'

I should like to say, however, even at this stage that the decision of the British Government is a wise and courageous one. The clear and definite declaration that the final transference of power will take place by a date not later than June 1948 not only removes all misconception and suspicion, but also brings reality and a certain dynamic quality to the present situation in India. That decision will undoubtedly have far-reaching consequences and puts a burden and responsibility on all concerned.

It is a challenge to all of us and we shall try to meet it bravely in the spirit of that challenge. I trust that we shall all endeavour to get out of the ruts and end the internal conflicts that have

frustrated our efforts and delayed our advance and accept this burden and responsibility keeping only the independence and advancement of India in view.

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY'S TASK

The work of the Constituent Assembly must now be carried on with greater speed so that the new and independent India may take shape and be clothed with a constitution worthy of her and bringing relief and opportunity to all her children. In this great work we invite afresh all those who have kept aloof and we ask all to be partners in this joint and historic undertaking casting aside fear and suspicion, which ill become a great people on the eve of freedom.

The Constituent Assembly, however constituted, can only proceed with its work on a voluntary basis. There can be no compulsion, except the compulsion of events, which none can ignore. The moment British rule goes, the responsibility for the governance of India must inevitably rest on her people and their representatives alone. They will have to shoulder that responsibility. Why then should we not accept this responsibility now and work together to find integrated solutions of our problems? No external authority is going to hinder us in future.

The British Government on behalf of their people have expressed their good-will and good wishes to the people of India. We have had a long past of conflict and ill-will. But we earnestly hope that this past is over. We look forward to a peaceful and co-operative transition and to the establishment of close and friendly relations with the British people for the mutual advantage of both countries and for the advancement of the cause of peace and freedom all over the world.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's statement, which was issued in consultation with Congress colleagues in the Cabinet, was received with keen interest in Muslim League circles. While the official League reply to it will be given by the League Working Committee when it meets, an unofficial League view available on Saturday night considered Pandit Nehru's appeal as helpful in spirit, but vague in content. The Muslim League, according to an exponent of this view-point, has always been willing to come to a peaceful settlement on the basis of independence to each of the two major nations.

'Pandit Nehru's references to the present Constituent Assembly, however, must be regarded as inconsistent with his expressed desire for Muslim co-operation. The new situation created by the Statement of 20th February calls for an altogether new approach and a method different to that represented by the present Constituent Assembly. That new approach must be on the basis of two sovereign States coming together for all common purposes by voluntary agreement. The moment Congress accepts this principle the entire situation will change and all bitterness will disappear', said a Muslim League spokesman.—API

5. Implications of HMG's Statement

Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to M.K. Gandhi, 24 February 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 52-4.

New Delhi

Dear Bapu,

... You must have seen my statement on the new declaration made by the British Government. That statement was considered carefully by all our colleagues in the Interim Government minus, of course, the Muslim Leaguers. We wanted very much to consult Kripalani before a

statement was issued and he was to have come here. But then he fell ill at Allahabad. We felt that something should be said soon both for India and abroad. Attlee's statement contains much that is indefinite and likely to give trouble. But I am convinced that it is in the final analysis a brave and definite statement. It meets our oft-repeated demand for quitting India. It may not be exactly as we would have liked it. But the real thing is that they have finally decided and announced that they are quitting. Whatever their motives might be, they cannot go back on this and everything that happens from now onwards must be governed by it.

The present position is that if the Muslim League comes into the Constituent Assembly, which is very unlikely, then the Cabinet Mission's Statement of 16th May applies. Otherwise the limitations of that Statement go and the Constituent Assembly functions really as a sovereign body without sections and groups and a limited Centre. But there is one limitation: that its decisions will apply only to the parts represented in it. More or less this was what you said when we met last. This may result in the Indian Union being first established for the whole of India except Bengal, the Punjab and Sind. Of course the Union constitution will apply to or rather be open to all; but these provinces may not choose to adhere to it. If so the second question that arises is that those parts of Bengal and Punjab which are fully represented in the Constituent Assembly (Western Bengal and Southern Punjab) should be parts of the Union. That means a partition of Punjab and Bengal. It is unlikely that Jinnah or the Muslim League will agree to this truncated Pakistan which can never succeed economically or otherwise. They will thus have to make a choice ultimately between this and joining the Indian Union possibly on special terms. In other words the position of Bengal and Punjab in such an event approximates to that of an Indian State.

Matters will move swiftly now or at any rate after Mountbatten comes. We do not yet know what special directive has been given to Mountbatten by the British Cabinet. Logically this should be to function as a constitutional head only and to allow the Government to act as a Dominion Government. That would mean the Government having a leader. This again would bring matters with the Muslim League to a head.

The Working Committee is meeting on the 5th March and we shall take no other step till then. Our general outlook at present is to approach privately some of the Muslim League leaders and try to induce them to come into the Constituent Assembly. If they refuse to come in, then the question of their remaining in the Interim Government has to be faced afresh. For the moment we are not pressing for their resignation as this would, of course, put an end to all talk of cooperation. But anyhow this matter should be settled one way or the other in the course of the next month.

We have to go ahead now rapidly with the Constituent Assembly. We shall try to work to a time-table which means finishing the constitution-making by the end of the year.

Your advice at this critical moment would help us greatly. But you are too far away for consultation and you refuse to move out of East Bengal. Still if you could convey to us your ideas on the subject, we would be very grateful.

As I have already written to you, the Asian Conference begins on the 23rd March and will last for at least ten days. We are having a very distinguished and representative gathering then from almost all the countries of Asia. If you do not come to it your absence will be keenly felt by all.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

6. Gandhi's Reading of 20th February Statement

Letter from M.K. Gandhi to Jawaharlal Nehru, 24 February 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 12–13.

KAZIRKHIL, RAMGANJ P.S.,
NOAKHALI DT.

CHI JAWAHARLAL,

Today being silence day I am writing this. But it will be typed for your easy reading.

I have read Attlee's speech. Lest I might embarrass you by an untoward word or phrase I am not saying anything just now.

Evidently I had anticipated practically the whole of it in my speeches here, that is, if I am interpreting the speech correctly. My interpretation is this:

Independence will be recognized of those parts which desired it and will do without British protection.

The British will remain where they are wanted.

This may lead to Pakistan for those provinces or portions which may want it. No one will be forced one way or the other. The Congress provinces if they are *wise* will get what they want.

Much will depend upon what the Constituent Assembly will do and what you as the Interim Government are able to do.

If the British Government are and are able to remain sincere the declaration is good. Otherwise it is dangerous.

Now about Sardar Niranjana Singh Gill. He has been to Bihar and has produced a report which somewhat reflects upon the Sinha Ministry. You should see him and his report. It has gone to Suhrawardy and Sinha under my advice. He and Sardar Jiwan Singh have not hit it off. The whole thing is bad. INA seems to have split up. Probably you know all this.

In view of the above report I might have to go to Bihar. God knows. You may show this to friends.

Hope you are well.

Blessings from
BAPU

7. 'The Last Chance'

Editorial from *Dawn*, 24 February 1947.

Calling the latest British decision 'a challenge to all of us', Pandit Nehru promises: 'We shall try to meet it bravely in the spirit of that challenge'. But the vagueness of the platitudes with which he proceeds to invite the Muslims (without mentioning them) 'to be partners in this joint and historic undertaking, casting aside fear and suspicion' justifies little hope that Congress intends anything but the bravery of words. Nor does his obdurate refusal to read in the 20 February Statement the obituary of the Constituent Assembly indicate a correction of the Congress's angle of perverted vision. And yet the situation created by the British declaration does provide one more—and the last—chance to India's largest political party to shed its complexes and communal narrowness, its own fear and suspicion, and to rise to that height of statesmanship of

which in the past it has proved incapable because of its reliance on a British verdict in favour of Akhand Hindustan. But manoeuvring for advantage and jockeying for position has become second nature with Hindu leadership, so that even now when Britain makes it plainly known that she is no longer interested in these inner complexities of the Indian scene, the second most important personality in the Congress cannot restrain his genius for misinterpretation of plainly spoken British words.

The Muslim position needs no re-stating. Eight months ago they gave practical proof of their desire for a peaceful settlement and agreed to a big sacrifice. They accepted the Cabinet Mission's Plan for limited Pakistan superimposed with a limited Union Centre. Almost immediately began Congress manoeuvres to destroy the basis of the first and strengthen the scope and powers of the second. The history of that Congress intrigue of interpretations requires no recapitulation. That scheme is dead and cannot be revived. The machinery it set up for a purpose no longer valid is likewise obsolete. The concession that the Muslims once made elicited from the Hindus not responsive trust but a renewed barrage to bear down vital Muslim positions. The Muslim gesture of goodwill was met with intrigue and ill will. The experiment has failed, the concessions stands irrevocably withdrawn. Not again will the Muslim nation gamble with its fate.

But the door to an honourable understanding on a new and more realistic basis still stands invitingly open. The British Statement should spur the Congress towards it more than the Muslim League. What Pandit Nehru describes as 'obscure' is not so obscure after all. If the zero hour finds the Congress still cutting capers on its high horse, both horse and rider will find the ambit of their gambolling reduced to much narrower limits than the dreamland of Akhand Hindustan. The illusion of a united India may take time in fading, but fade it must on the morrow of next year's June. When the dawn of freedom comes its dear light will not shine only on the tri-colour to gladden Hindu hearts. The crescent-spangled green of Muslim independence will vie with it in the glory of equal sovereignty. How many banners will proclaim the rebirth of kingdoms from the palace-tops of Their Highnesses is at present incalculable.

That is the certainty, whether Congress likes it or not. Whatever the shape of it may be, Pakistan awaits the Muslims' taking, and take it they will. Still Muslims would far rather take over their inheritance by mutual agreement, if that were possible. And why should it not be possible? Pandit Nehru wants Muslims to cast aside fear and suspicion. If 20 million Muslims are prepared to throw in their lot with some 120 million Hindus in Hindustan, why cannot 30 million Hindus throw in their lot with but 60 million Muslims in Pakistan? Who is being afraid and suspicious? There is no question of domination of one by the other; at least Muslims do not desire it in Pakistan. All that they want is that theirs shall be the leadership in progress whose benefits will be shared by all alike without favour and without discrimination. They do not grudge the Hindus the same leadership in Hindustan. Nor are Muslims averse to a pooling of resources for the purposes of joint progress and joint enterprise in spheres that admit of common endeavour. On that basis alone can there be a new approach, if only Congress will abandon its dream of Hindu domination. The last chance to make that new approach is still there. It is for the Congress to decide whether to take it or to burn the few remaining boats. It is doubtful if the trade unions, which in the recent past have often been at loggerheads with the employers, would be able to face the unpleasant necessity with which the Government's survey has confronted them. The attitude of their undisciplined followers may even threaten the leadership of the trade unions if the latter is inclined to accept the Government policy as the dictates of fate. The Socialists may find it very difficult to prevail upon the workers to abandon

all their demands because it is difficult to reverse the effect of their own propaganda among the workers, which has been carried on for decades and which promised a 'Socialist utopia'.

8. 'Majority of MPs in Favour of HMG's Policy'

Dawn, 24 February 1947.

LONDON, Saturday.—The Labour Cabinet's decisions on India, including an announcement of the date (June 1948) when the British will quit, are expected to have the support of a vast majority of Government's parliamentary strength of nearly 400 members in the House of Commons debate during the week after the next.

The Liberal Party, whose handful of representatives nevertheless represent several million votes in the country, may also back the Government.

The Conservative Opposition has not yet disclosed whether it intends to drive the Government to a vote. They will make their chief target of criticism the Government's decision to put a date on British departure. The change of the Viceroy may be another debating point.

It is the British Government's practice to inform Opposition leaders of its intention to take fateful decisions and there is a belief that this practice was followed in the present instance. Consequently, political observers are puzzled at Mr Churchill's insistence on Thursday that the Prime Minister Mr Clement Attlee should state publicly the reasons which led to Viceroy Lord Wavell's retirement.

Most acutely distressed by the announcement of the quit date include Sir John Anderson, a former Governor of Bengal, who apparently thinks the securing of agreement and transfer of power impossible in 15 months.

A curtain raiser to the Commons' debate will be the India debate in the House of Lords on Tuesday, which Conservative Peers, who vastly outnumber Labour, have set down as an amendment dissociating themselves from the Government's decision. A debate of high quality is expected as the Peers include many statesmen with experience of India's political affairs.

9. Nehru Explains His Press Statement

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Wavell, 24 February 1947
IOR, R/3/1/120, Acc. No. 3438, NAI.

17 York Road,
New Delhi

Dear Lord Wavell,

You must have seen a statement I have issued giving my reaction to Mr Attlee's statement in the House of Commons on 20th February. Normally I would have waited till the meeting of the Congress Working Committee. But I thought that a clear declaration at this stage was desirable and helpful.

2. I have deliberately not referred in my statement to many matters which are by no means clear. I wanted to emphasize the dominant feature of Mr Attlee's statement from which other consequences naturally flow. These other matters will have to be considered so that there might be no misunderstanding in the future.

3. In the course of our conversation on 21st evening you communicated to me a message on behalf of HMG. This referred to the joint Letter we had sent to you pointing out that the

continuance of the Muslim League members in the Interim Government was incompatible with the British Cabinet's plan or with any effective functioning of the Government. You stated that HMG had postponed a reply to it in view of the developments that had taken place, further that while the resolution passed by the All India Congress Committee on 5th January accepted the British Government's statement of 6th December, there were some points in it which seemed to take away somewhat from that full acceptance. It was also pointed out that some rules made by the Constituent Assembly were also inconsistent with the provisions of the Cabinet Delegation's scheme and appeared to encroach on the powers of the Sections and Groups.

4. I pointed out to you then that there was some misapprehension about this matter and in effect there was no such variance. If you so wish it I can consider any particular points in detail though I hardly think that this is necessary in view of the statement made by Mr Attlee on 20th February. I might however draw your attention to the fact that this criticism of the All-India Congress Committee's resolution and the rules of the Constituent Assembly has come more than six weeks after they were passed. It is easy to criticize complicated sets of rules or a long resolution. But I am quite sure that the objections raised have no force whatever. We had stated quite clearly in the resolution and subsequently that we had accepted the statement of 6th December. It is easy enough to remove doubts if there is an intention to understand and to cooperate. But it is not possible to do so if the intention is just to find fault and in no event to cooperate. We have tried in the past to meet all legitimate objections and criticisms so as to gain the cooperation of all in the work of the Constituent Assembly. We shall continue to do so because obviously it is desirable to have that cooperation.

5. We sent to you our joint letter asking for the resignation of the Muslim League members in the Cabinet because it had become impossible in the interest of good government and progress to have a Central Government which was divided and in which one group functioned as an opposition both in governmental activities and in the country. This was contrary to the Cabinet Delegation's scheme and it had a disruptive influence on the administration. We have seen the extraordinary spectacle of members of the Central Government leading and encouraging 'Direct Action' and disobedience still continuing openly and something similar is now being attempted in the Frontier Province. It is difficult for me to conceive of any Central Government whose members function in this way. It is obvious that this matter requires urgent decision. Attlee's statement throws no light upon it.

6. Nevertheless I told you in the course of our interview that I would not press for an immediate answer to our joint letter because we were anxious, in view of the new situation that had arisen not to bar the door to joint and cooperative working. Mr Attlee's statement in some ways over-rides the Cabinet Mission's plan. As I understand it, it means this: If the Muslim League comes into the Constituent Assembly, then the scheme of 16th May will continue to apply. If the League still refuses to come in, then others consequences follow.

7. This will have to be cleared up in the near future to enable us to proceed rapidly with the work of constitution-making. We shall try our utmost to gain the cooperation of the Muslim League on the basis of the Cabinet Mission's scheme of 16th May. If however, we fail, we shall have to proceed on the other lines indicated or flowing from Mr Attlee's statement. Whether the Interim Government can remain as it is or has to change will also depend on the developments indicated above. It is clear that that the present position cannot be maintained.

Yours sincerely
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. Initial Reactions to HMG's Statement

Telegram from G.E.B. Abell to Ronald Harris, 25 February 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 812-14.

MOST IMMEDIATE

CONFIDENTIAL

NEW DELHI

No. 352-S. Your telegram No. 2517 of 22nd February. Reaction to statement of policy. Full press comment and other reaction have been sent you by telegram.

2. A lead has been given by Nehru in describing the new policy as a wise and courageous one. This summarizes most of the nationalist press comment. The fixing of a date is welcomed, and is admitted to prove the sincerity of His Majesty's Government. There has as yet been little examination of the detail of the plan of transfer. A leading article in yesterday's *Hindustan Times* points out with regard to States that although the paramountcy of Britain may lapse, the future Indian Union is bound to evolve its own paramountcy rights which are inherent in the geographical and economic relations of States with the rest of India. There has been comment on the vagueness of paragraph 10 of the statement. Congress comment generally stresses the hand-over to a Central Government, and is beginning to claim further powers for the Central Government in anticipation. Statement is held by Congress press to strengthen position of Constituent Assembly. Nehru's letter telegraphed today shows that Congress will do their best to reach settlement with League but will expect His Majesty's Government to agree to a new method of framing a constitution if they fail.

3. Gandhi has yet made no comment.

4. Jinnah has declared that 'the Muslim League will not yield an inch in their demand for Pakistan' and is reported to have said that the Constituent Assembly was dead, and other Muslim leaders are insisting that the new approach must be on the basis of two sovereign States. Some Muslim perturbation has been expressed that if the British align themselves openly with the Congress till they withdraw, civil war will become a distinct possibility. Muslim press comment generally stresses possibility of power being handed over to existing Provincial Governments. The date is welcomed, though much more guardedly than in Congress comment.

5. Governors have reported reactions in their Provinces as generally on the above lines, but waiting for a lead from the All-India party leaders. Assam comment is qualified by the peculiar position of the Province in Section B, and holds that the new statement is not likely to result in a settlement or an improvement in the position. It is recognized generally in the country that the statement is a challenge to Indian leaders, and the consequences of failure to reach a settlement will be serious. There has been no outburst anywhere, and left-wing Communist comment is negligible. Several Governors report that it is too early to assess clearly the reactions to the statement.

6. Bhopal's immediate reactions have been telegraphed on the 22nd, and Secretary of State has seen his public statement which is more helpful and which invites the States to make their full contribution.

7. Viceroy's impression is that while the statement has had a good reception generally, the two major parties interpret it on contradictory lines.

8. No definite hardening of opinion is likely until after the meetings of the Working Committees of the two main parties; the Congress meeting is fixed for the first week of March,

and the Muslim League is at present expected to be a fortnight later. Viceroy has asked Jinnah to see him soon.

11. New Basis of Agreement between Congress and League

Letter from Sudhindra Nath Ghosh to J.B. Kripalani, President, INC, Allahabad,
25 February 1947

AICC Papers, File No. G-11/1946, NMML.

35 Amherst Street
Calcutta

To
The President,
The Indian National Congress,
Allahabad

Sir,

The intention to carry on the task of constitution making with a greater is likely to fail without the League's co-operation. You may please note that—

1. As soon as the Assembly divides into sections and the minority (Congress members in Section B and C) draws up a constitution within a short time, the League must choose to join the above Section at a later stage only to break up that constitution by its majority vote. This is absolutely certain and there is no remedy if Cabinet Mission's Award is to be strictly followed.
2. If a new basis of agreement is to be found, a purely Indian Round Table Conference with the States, the League and the Congress with the elimination of British middle men should be convened and the deliberation completed before the next sitting of the Constituent Assembly.
3. In order to facilitate the success of this conference it is extremely important to set up coalition ministry within the next two or three weeks in all the provinces at least in Bihar, the Punjab and Bengal. The Congress will lose nothing thereby, but on the contrary, will be able, if it likes to have a friendly contact with Muslim masses in villages through the medium of these coalitions, this contact being otherwise impossible after the riots and British separatist declaration.
4. If, in spite of coalition, there be no agreement in the Round Table Conference, the Constituent Assembly has to meet charged with the task of a speedy delivery of the constitution for the whole of India and separately for the provinces. *The Assembly must refuse to break up into Sections* as may easily be done unanimously or by an overwhelming majority.

Although this will be a clear departure from the original Award, the British government, in view of their latest statement, will not be able to break up the Assembly. But the Congress has to declare itself free, its earlier resolution on 6.1.47 after a fixed date before which the Round Table Conference may be ended. Finally the Congress along with the States have to ask the nation to support the Constitution where Muslim opinion will have the greatest importance.

5. The constitution for Bengal, the Punjab and Sindh cannot be left out, for in that case there will be no meaning of a Union Constitution to NWFP and Assam which will be geographically isolated.
6. There is more than one clear hint in the White Paper that the final transference of power will be preceded by a *general election*. The Muslim League is already preparing the ground for this, in its own way through Civil Disobedience in the Punjab and NWFP—that in the latter strangely synchronizing with Mr Attlee's declaration on 20.2.47. *Either through coalition ministries or otherwise*, the Congress should *immediately* set up machineries everywhere for *Muslim contacts in villages*, particularly of the Muslim majority provinces. These contacts should not necessarily be opposed to Pakistan but definitely anti-imperialistic rather than anti-Hindu.
7. Nothing in the next meeting of the Congress on 5.3.47 should remove possibilities of a stable League—Congress truce.

Sincerely yours
Sudhindra Nath Ghosh

12. Impact of HMG's Statement

Extracts from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to V.K. Krishna Menon, 27 February 1947

SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 55–8.

New Delhi

My dear Krishna,

... 3. Whatever the virtues or sins of Attlee's statement might be, it has shaken up people here and forced them to think furiously. The Princes are meeting here in large numbers and again there is an attempt on the part of Bhopal and his supporters to sabotage the Constituent Assembly insofar as they can do it. They have been encouraged by Attlee's references to the States and probably imagine that they can get better terms by standing out of the Constituent Assembly. On the other hand some other Princes object to this. We are meeting them day after tomorrow and are likely to have a fairly lively conference. Bhopal, the cleverest of them, wants to help the Muslim League as far as possible. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar continues to play an intricate and double game and generally gives trouble. Behind them all is the Political Department intriguing and trying to put a spanner into everything.

4. The Muslim League is mum and Jinnah has chosen this moment for a little cruise in the Arabian Sea. I doubt very much if they will come into the Constituent Assembly. They imagine that they can exercise much more pressure from outside....

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

13. 'Not British Withdrawal but Continued Domination through Divide and Rule'

People's Age, 2 March 1947.

The following statement has been issued to the Press by R. Palme Dutt, well-known Communist leader of Great Britain:

Wavell's dismissal and his replacement by Mountbatten and the new statement of policy for India reflect the further deepening crisis in India and the bankruptcy of the Cabinet Mission Plan. The new statement of policy is the most reactionary document yet issued by the British Government since the opening of the Cabinet Mission's negotiations.

This document has been widely preserved as if it were a great step forward setting a date for British withdrawal from India in June 1948. In point of fact it has nothing to do with the British withdrawing from India—what the document really lays down is something very different.

It makes it absolutely and finally clear that the Constituent Assembly will not be recognized as valid unless it contains both the Congress and the Muslim League.

It further makes it definitely clear that any constitution which may be drawn up will only be ratified by the British Parliament on the condition that it conforms completely with the requirement imposed by the Cabinet Mission Plan and is accepted by both the Congress and the League.

Thus, this question which was left without an explicit answer in the Parliamentary debates following the London Conference (when Mr Alexander was pressed thrice to state whether the British Government regarded the present Constituent Assembly to be valid or not and to be declared thrice his refusal to answer yes or no)—this question has now been explicitly answered in the negative.

It is made clear that the Constituent Assembly is in no sense whatsoever sovereign but entirely subject to Parliament and the British Government and that its decisions are not valid unless agreed to by the Congress and the League.

Intensifies Congress—League Differences

The obvious effect of this is not solving the antagonism between the Congress and the League but intensifying it, placing a premium on the League stand of irreconcilable opposition, since the British Government guarantees that such opposition if firmly maintained will be successful.

Even the London Times editorial has noted that the effect of the document will not diminish but inflame and intensify political and communal antagonism.

What is new in the document are the definite steps now proposed to be taken in the event the deadlock continues, which in fact this document does everything possible to continue as a consequence of its provisions.

The White Paper makes it absolutely clear that in the event of the continuance of the deadlock between the Congress and the League, the British Government after a period of 15 months will impose its own solution, that is, it will impose a British-made constitution taking the line of partition.

Further the language of the statement indicates a preparation for that British Award taking the line of partition.

In respect to British India it is laid down that the British Government will decide if a single Central Government or separate Provincial States or State based on grouping of Provinces, is to be set up.

In regard to the Princes it is emphasized that Britain retains paramountcy rights in her own hands independently of any Indian Government, and that any future relations between Britain and the Princes will be decided by Britain.

Here it is important to note that the official announcement of the appointment of Mountbatten declares, firstly, that he is appointed the Viceroy and Governor General of India, and, secondly, that he is also appointed as the representative of the British Crown in its dealings with Indian States.

Thereby it is implied that even if the formal position of the Viceroy and the Governor-General were to be modified, the status for Mountbatten in India as the representative for the Crown in its relations with the Princes will remain.

Should Open Eyes of Indian Patriots

Thus, the general character of the scheme continues to the extreme point the policy of divide and rule, to be the basis for continued domination over India.

The terms of the declaration should open the eyes of serious Indian patriots to the real character of the policy which Britain is pursuing in India, and the consequent dangerous entanglement of the Indian political organizations in the Cabinet Mission Plan.

The greater the entanglement, the more open and ruthless the British declaration of their intention to impose unilateral decisions on the constitutional future of India.

It should further be noted that the appointment of Mountbatten (renowned for his active military record in South East Asia) is accompanied by the appointment of General Ismay to be his Chief Adviser. Ismay was Churchill's former Chief-of-Staff.

This throws a sharp light on the concentration of military preparations for the period now opening in India.

It is more than ever clear that the path forward for Indian freedom lies through development of a united Indian national front breaking completely with subservience to the British imposed Plan and leading the way to establish a constitution on the basis of the wishes of the Indian people.

14. Moonje Comments on the Indian Policy Statement

Letter from B.S. Moonje to Ashutosh Lahiry, 4 March 1947

B.S. Moonje Papers, Subject File No. 74, NMML.

Kotah

My dear Ashubabu,

I have received your notice of the meeting of the Working committee to be held in New Delhi on the 8th and 9th of March. But I am very sorry that I will not be able to attend it. On those very days I have an appointment in Bombay long ago fixed.

My suggestions for whatever worth they may be, in respect of the resolution which will be adopted on Mr Attlee's recent announcement, are:

We must offer thanks to Mr Attlee's and his Labour government for making a definite announcement that they will hand over power to Indian hands latest by June 1948.

We must deplore that the announcement has been so worded as to encourage fissiparous tendencies. Already Dr Abdul Latif of Hyderabad has announced that as soon as the powers are handed over, Nizam of Hyderabad will declare himself as the His majesty the King of Hyderabad.

The Finance Minister of Bengal has made a statement in the Bengal Legislative Assembly that Independent Bengal would be economically a stable state.

Sind has already begun in the similar move and the Provincial Muslim League of Sind has adopted a resolution of forming Muslim National Home Guards 10,000 strong and has requested the Muslim League Government of the Province to equip them with arms.

The Coalition Ministry of Sir Khizr Hyat Khan has a suddenly resigned leaving the field free to the Muslim League to do as it pleases in the Punjab.

Similar tendencies are very markedly noticeable in the NW Frontier Province.

The Hindu Mahasabha must warn the Congress of the dangers of such moves by the Muslim League and to meet the possibility of such danger soon taking shape and action, should prepare the country for effective counter-moves with the objective of maintaining the integrity of India as one State and one Nation, laying streets on the re-organization of police force and Army so that in their composition, the Hindus may not be less than 75 per cent and the Moslems not more than 25 per cent.

Hindu Mahasabha should take active steps in organizing its own Home Guards in self-defence and announcing its hope that Congress will now see the advisability of organizing common Hindu front for which the Hindu Mahasabha will offer its whole-hearted co-operation as the Mussulmans have not organized a common Moslem Front practically throughout India.

I trust Dr Mookherjee and Mr N.C. Chatterjee will attend the meeting. I am very sorry that I will be unable to attend it. If for any reason, the meeting were to prolong beyond the 12th March I will certainly attend.

You may show this letter to Mr Bhopatkar.

Yours sincerely,
Dr B.S. Moonje

15. Congress Stand on the 20 February Statement

Resolution Passed by the Congress Working Committee Meeting at Delhi, 6-8 March 1947

AICC Papers, File No. G-43/1947, NMML.

The following resolutions were passed:

PRIME MINISTER ATTLEE'S DECLARATION OF FEBRUARY 20, 1947

The Working Committee welcome the declaration made on behalf of the British Government of their definite intention to transfer power finally by a date not later than June 1948 and to take steps to that end in advance.

The transfer of power, in order to be smooth, should be preceded by the recognition in practice of the Interim Government as a Dominion Government with effective control over the services and administration, and the Viceroy and Governor-General functioning as the constitutional head of the Government. The Central Government must necessarily function as a Cabinet with full authority and responsibility. Any other arrangement is incompatible with good Government and is peculiarly dangerous during a transitional period full of political and economic crises.

The Congress has already expressed its acceptance of the British Cabinet Mission's scheme of 16th May, 1946, and has further accepted the interpretations put upon it by the British Cabinet on 6 December, 1946. In accordance therewith, the Constituent Assembly has been functioning and has appointed various Committees to carry on its work. It has become all the more essential now to expedite this work so that the Constitution for an Indian Union and its

constituent units should be finally prepared and given effect to well within the stated period to facilitate the final transfer of power.

The Working Committee welcome the decision of a number of States to join the Constituent Assembly and trust that all the States and their peoples will be effectively represented in this task of making a Constitution for an Indian Union. The Committee invite afresh the representatives of the Muslim League, who have been elected to the Constituent Assembly, to join in this historic undertaking.

The work of the Constituent Assembly is essentially voluntary. The Working Committee have frequently stated that there can or should be no compulsion in the making of a Constitution for India. It is the fear of compulsion or coercion that has given rise to distrust and suspicion and conflict. If this fear goes, as it must, it will be easy to determine India's future so as to safeguard the rights of all communities and given equal opportunities to all. It has been made clear that the constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly will apply only to those areas which accept it. It must also be understood that any province or part of a province which accepts the Constitution and desires to join the Union cannot be prevented from doing so. Thus there must be no compulsion either way, and the people will themselves decide their future. This peaceful and co-operative method is the only way to make democratic decisions with the maximum of consent.

In this hour when final decisions have to be taken, and the future of India has to be shaped by Indian minds and hands, the Working Committee earnestly calls upon all parties and groups, and all Indians generally, to discard violent and coercive methods, and cooperate peacefully and democratically in the making of a constitution. The time for decision has come and no one can stop it or stand by and remain unaffected. The end of an era is at hand and new age will soon begin. Let this dawn of the new age be ushered in bravely, leaving hates and discords in the dead past.

INVITATION TO MUSLIM LEAGUE TO MEET CONGRESS REPRESENTATIVES

In view of new developments which are leading to a swift transfer of power in India, it has become incumbent on the people of India to prepare themselves jointly and cooperatively for this change, so that this may be effected peacefully and to the advantage of all. The Working Committee, therefore, invite the All India Muslim League to nominate representatives to meet representatives of the Congress in order to consider the situation that has arisen and to devise means to meet it.

The Working Committee will keep in close touch with the representatives of the Sikhs and other groups concerned, with a view to cooperating with them in the steps that may have to be taken and in safeguarding their interests.

16. 'Heated India Debate: MP Demands Withdrawal of Troops'

Daily Worker, 7 March 1947.

A DEMAND for a categorical assurance that no British troops would remain in India at the request of a puppet government after the transfer of power was made in the Commons last night by Mr Piratin (Com., Mile End).

His pointed questions on Indian policy several times brought Mr Alexander, Minister of Defence, to his feet in reply—but he did not give the assurance Mr Piratin demanded.

The debate was opened by Mr Churchill with a lurid denunciation of the Government's policy deploring 'the clattering of the British Empire' and referring to Lord Mountbatten's task as 'operation scuttle.'

Mr Piratin urged the Government not to be influenced by this tub-thumping speech in which there was nothing constructive. He opposed the Conservative amendment as a manoeuvre to delay the settlement of the Indian problem. He would like to give his support to the Government's policy, but he could not do so until he had some further information.

The White Paper said that power would be handed over to a Constituent Assembly; or if there was not one to a central government or to existing provincial governments, or in some other way still undecided.

MAXIMUM FRICTION

This placed a premium on obstruction. It was an open invitation to reactionary sectional interests, notably Princes' States to withhold co-operation and create the maximum of interval friction:

Then, he asked, were British troops to be withdrawn, in June 1948, or later? Mr Alexander intervened to say the troops would be withdrawn at the time of the handing over of power.

Why, then, asked Mr Piratin, did the White Paper say it was important that the defence of India should be provided for—that meant provided for by us after the transfer of power.

He would like an unequivocal statement from the Government that there would be no British troops stationed in India whether invited by a stooge government or uninvited.

MINISTER INTERRUPTS

Mr Alexander intervened again, saying that this was an extraordinary proposition. He knew of Mr Piratin's keen interest in the Russian ideology.

Mr Piratin observed that Mr Alexander had referred to the Soviet Union and not to Trans-jordania or Irak, where troops were stationed at the request of a puppet government.

Mr Alexander: 'Why not?'

Mr Piratin: 'Is it our intention to have puppet government which would then invite British troops to be stationed there?'

It would be easier to get the co-operation of Moslems with the Hindus if the Government made a categorical statement that responsibility should be vested in the Constituent Assembly as now established.

That would ensure that individuals and organizations sincerely desirous of a happy solution would take their full part.

Earlier Mr Alexander had replied to the violent attack from Mr Churchill.

He made a strong plea to the Conservative Party not to oppose the Government's policy but to follow Earl Halifax.

PRAISED TORY

At the beginning of his speech, Mr Alexander said that he wished that the debate could have gone on the same non-party lines as previous Indian debates. Later, he showered praises on Sir Walter Smiles (Cons., County Down) for having announced his support of the Government, and said that the aim of Mr Churchill's speech was to unite the Tory Party on India. It would have been very much better if the Tory Party had had second thoughts as they had in the House

of Lords last week. The attitude of that former Viceroy Earl Halifax on this matter was more likely to lead to peace, concord and cooperation in India than Mr Churchill's speech.

COALITION POLICY

For the most part Mr Alexander sought to prove that the Government's policy was not a departure from the principles agreed by the coalition Government.

With regard to the future of defence, after June 1948, the Government would be glad, in the course of the Treaty they hoped to make, to co-operate with India, subject only to the limitations imposed by U.N. Mr Churchill made particularly lurid threats when he spoke. He revealed that it was not he but Mr Attlee who ordered the arrest of the Congress leaders in 1942, and charged the Government with having broken away from the agreement which had so-long subsisted between the Labour and Conservative parties.

The 'cardinal mistake' was to entrust the Government to Mr Nehru, which had led to great degeneration and demoralization in the Indian Government machinery and to the slaughter of 30000 to 40,000 people.

Communism was growing so fast that it had been found necessary to raid and suppress Communist establishments. The broad tolerance shown to Communists here had not been shown by the Government of India.

The time limit of 14 months for the transfer of power had extinguished Indian unity. It would be used to prepare for civil war, and the result would be fragmentation of India.

Asserting that there were three or four times as many troops in Palestine as India, he declared that it would be a world crime stripping us of our reputation and staining our name, to allow one-fifth of the world's population to fall in chaos.

Taking up a suggestion made by Mr Zilliacus (Lab., Gateshead), he asked if it was right to lay little Palestine before U.N. What conceivable reason could be found for not following the same course for the sub-continent of India.

17. League–Congress Negotiations for Future Constitution of India

Letter from Aga Khan to M.A. Jinnah, 9 March 1947

Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah Papers (hereafter *Jinnah Papers*), Vol. I, Part I, pp. 210–11.

PERSONAL

LAND'S END, BOMBAY.

My dear Quaid-i-Azam,

I have waited till I heard of your return to Delhi before writing this. The Nawab Ruler of Bhopal kindly came with me and I went to see Gandhiji with my long-cherished hope of bringing him as the uncrowned king of the H[indus] and you as the uncrowned king of the M[uslims] together and that you two should come to terms as to a future agreed Constitution for India. With goodwill and common sense a Hindustan–Pakistan Con[federation] or alliance or Dual Realms, call it what you like should be not only possible but not difficult. Well! Gandhiji feels that for any progress to be made in the matter of negotiations on the subject you would naturally like to meet a person with credentials to speak for and on behalf of the Congress. He had, he said, no such credentials. The only person who in his opinion could speak with such authority would be the President of the Congress whoever he may be at the time of the talks, 'even an Englishman', as Gandhiji said. If it meets with your approval the question of methods and

ways and means to arrange contact is not likely to present much difficulty and I may suggest the name of a neutral [person] of the highest rank such as will leave no question of who first moved in the matter, Hindu or Muslim, to arise. In great confidence I may suggest to you for your personal approval HH the N[awab] of B[hopal]. If you approve of the idea, you may give HH your approval. I fully understand that only you are entitled to speak for the Muslims of India according to all canons of historical precedent.

All my sincere friendship,

AGA KHAN

PS. Of course if you don't like it the whole thing *drops*.

A.K.

¹ Emphasis in the original

18. UP Governor's Assessment of the Political Situation

Extract from a Letter from Wylie to Wavell, 9 March 1947

IOR, L/P&J/10/78, Acc. No. 3651, NAI.

SECRET

... 12. While I have been drafting this letter the Congress Working Committee have been in session and I have now the text of their two main resolutions—on HMG's statement of 20th February and on the Punjab disturbances in front of me. I had better give you some background here. I may be over-timorous but I do not like the present situation. At the moment in the UP it is seeming fair, but it is full of dangerous possibilities. At the risk of being considered a panic monger therefore, I have formed a small committee of senior European officers who meet me fairly frequently when we try to consider what, if anything, we should do. My line with them hitherto has been this:

- (a) the chances of a Central Government competent to speak for all India being in existence in June 1948 are dubious.
- (b) Any attempt by HMG to hand over Central Government functions to the whole of the Punjab or to the whole of Bengal will lead to civil war in those Provinces.
- (c) it is most unsafe to gamble on any unpleasant developments which may be coming being postponed till the clock strikes 12 on the night of 30th June 1948.
- (d) there is now little prospect of acceptable employment being available for European officers after June 1948.
- (e) if these gloomy prognostications have any sense in them at all—even 5 per cent of sense—then European officers should be advised to send their families to England as soon as possible.

In order not to invite a panic I have suggested that for the moment advice as at (e) be given only if advice on the point is asked for, but I have added that when the Congress Working Committee and the Muslim League Working Committee have spoken we shall know better how the probabilities stand. The Congress Working Committee have now spoken and I shall presently have to decide whether we are to volunteer advice to get European families out of

the country or whether we are to stick to our present line. Frankly I see nothing in the two main resolutions passed by the Congress Working Committee which is in the least likely to heal the present breach between the communities. The tone of the main solution—that on situation created by HMG's statement of 20th February—is not conciliatory. It is packed too with bland assumptions which cut at the root of the whole business:

- (a) that the interim Government is fit to become a Dominion Government for the whole of India.
- (b) that the making of a constitution for an Indian Union is as easy as falling off a log.
- (c) that the supreme difficulties of the party situation can be met by a two line sentence inviting the Muslim League to a discussion and
- (d) that for parts of Provinces to secede and go over to the Indian Union is the simplest thing in the world.

But when this resolution is read with the resolution about the Punjab, things are made much worse. The only way out 'which involves the least amount of compulsion' is 'a division of the Punjab into two Provinces, so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim parts.' To my own disquiet I actually agree with this dictum, for you will remember that I have held from the beginning that you will never settle the Indian problem without a redrawing of existing administrative boundaries. That however is far from saying that a reference at this moment to the carving up of the Punjab is the best way to procure a settlement between the Congress and Muslim League inside the short space of 15 months that is left to us. I still take a gloomy view therefore of the possibility of an all India settlement, however ramshackle, being achieved by June 1948. I suppose however that before I give stringent advice about precautionary measures here, I had better wait for the Muslim League's reply to these two Congress pronouncements. That when it comes it will be helpful I do not venture to hope. As you know, I have no faith in these long-range pronouncements, which is why I advocated Jinnah and Nehru being taken personally into our confidence before the statement of 20th February was issued. That way I thought that there was a 25 per cent chance of this statement achieving its purpose. I hope I may be wrong but I would not put the chances as high as 25 per cent now.

19. Congress Resolutions Explained

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Wavell, 9 March 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 897–901.

During the last three days the Congress Working Committee has anxiously considered the situation in the country and more specially the announcement made by Mr Attlee on 20th February. They have passed some resolutions and I am enclosing three of these for your information. I hope you will be good enough to send them to His Majesty's Government.

2. You will notice that the Working Committee have welcomed Mr Attlee's statement. We have purposely not gone into any details because the major decisions mentioned in it govern the situation. There are many matters which are not clear. Presumably light will be thrown upon them later on. For the present we did not think it necessary to draw special attention to any of these matters. It is clear, however, that an early decision will be required in regard to our future work in the Interim Government.

3. It is our intention, as you will observe from one of the resolutions sent, to approach the Muslim League for a joint meeting to consider the situation. We want to do everything in our power to get the League representatives into the Constituent Assembly, so that all of us might function in terms of the Cabinet Mission's statement of 16th May, 1946.

4. If unfortunately this is not possible, then we shall try to lay down a course of action which avoids friction and conflict. It is with this object in view that we have sought a meeting with the League and have also suggested the division of the Punjab into two parts. This principle would, of course, apply to Bengal also.

5. This proposal that we are making is not pleasant for us to contemplate, but such a course is preferable to an attempt by either party to impose its will upon the other. Recent events in the Punjab have demonstrated, if such demonstration was necessary, that it is not possible to coerce the non-Muslim minority in the Province, just as it is not possible or desirable to coerce the others. We have suggested a way out which we consider fair to all parties.

6. In this connection I should like to remove a misapprehension. Sir Stafford Cripps, in his speech in the House of Commons, has said that 'we could not accept the forcing of unwilling Provinces into a united Indian Government if they have not been represented in the making of the constitution. To that principle which has the assent of the Congress, we understand, we adhere...'. Reference has been made here to 'Provinces'. There appears to be some confusion about the use of the word 'Province' in this connection. The word used in the British Government's statement of 6th December, 1946, was 'areas', and when Congress assent is referred to it can only have reference to areas. Indeed Sir Stafford Cripps himself refers to areas also in the course of his speech.

7. This distinction is important as both in Bengal and Punjab there are very large non-Muslim minorities. In the event of Bengal or Punjab, as Provinces, deciding by a bare majority not to adhere to a Union, the question immediately arises about Western Bengal and Eastern Punjab which are predominantly non-Muslim areas and which have no intention whatever of separating themselves from the Indian Union.

8. It is in order to get over all these difficulties that we have suggested a partition of the Punjab and the same principle applies to Bengal. If the Muslim League accepts the British Cabinet's scheme of 16th May and co-operates in the Constituent Assembly, then this question does not arise in this form. But even so it is worth considering whether Bengal and Punjab should not both be divided into smaller Provinces. In the event of the Muslim League not accepting the Cabinet Delegation's scheme and not coming into the Constituent Assembly, the division of Bengal and Punjab becomes inevitable.

20. Attempts to Reach Agreement between Congress and League

The HindustanTimes, 10 March 1947

(A) 'CONGRESS & LEAGUE EXECUTIVES MAY CONFER'

NEW DELHI, Sunday—The Congress Working Committee's resolution on Premier Attlee's statement of 20 February has created a good effect in political quarters.

Although the Muslim League leaders are not prepared to commit themselves without knowing how Mr Jinnah will react to the situation they have said in private conversations that the hand of friendship extended by the Congress Working Committee should be grasped. They

believe that if the Working Committees of the two parties held a frank discussion it should be possible to come to a final agreement either on the basis of the Cabinet Missions's plan or on a new plan. They recognize that the issue of the partition of the Punjab and of Bengal will have to be faced, especially after the murder and devastation now raging in those provinces.

A meeting between the Working Committees of the two parties is not however regarded likely before the fourth week of March. By then the new Viceroy will also have arrived and he will be able to give an indication of the directive he has been given in regard to his role during the next 14 months.

(B) LEAGUE LEADER SEES NO NEW SITUATION IN CONGRESS OFFER

BOMBAY, 9 March—Mr I.I. Chundrigar, Commerce Minister of the Government of India and a member of the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League, who left for New Delhi by air today, in an interview said; 'Personally, I think there is no occasion for the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League to meet specially to consider what is described as the latest Congress offer to the Muslim League.'

He added: 'The Congress offer for negotiations is made with a loaded pistol. The Congress Working Committee has invited the representatives of the Muslim League to meet the representatives of the Congress for negotiations. At the same time Congress has made its position quite clear in another part of the resolution that the Central Government must necessarily function as a Cabinet with full authority and responsibility.'

No New Situation

'The Congress also wants the Constituent Assembly contemplated under the Cabinet's Mission's Plan, which is not now representing the 10 crores of Mussalmans of India to continue its work. I do not therefore; think that any new situation has arisen for the Working Committee and the Council of the All-India Muslim League to consider the so-called latest Congress offer to the Muslim League.'

Mr Chundrigar said that as long as the Congress did not accept Pakistan as the basis for starting negotiations with Muslim League, the Congress invitation to the Muslim League for any settlement was futile.—API

21. 'Lost Opportunity'

Dawn, 10 March 1947

Writing three days ago under the caption 'Last opportunity' we urged the Congress to get out of its communal ruts and face realities courageously by making a new approach to the Muslim league on the basis of separate sovereignty for the respective homelands of Muslims and Hindus. We expressed the hope that once agreement had been reached on this fundamental principle it might be possible to evolve common ground for cooperation between the two sovereign states in a limited sphere for the common good of both. We regret to say that the resolution released by the Congress Working Committee on Saturday largely belie these hopes and prove the truth of the adage that the leopard cannot change its spots. The leaders of Hindu India it would appear have lost their last opportunity. In saying this we are not forgetful of 'invitation' which the Congress has extended to the Muslim League 'to nominate representatives for discussion with the representatives of the Congress in order to consider the situation that has arisen and

to devise means to meet it'. But this invitation cannot be regarded in isolation from the views expressed and demands made by the Congress Working Committee in the same breath. Some of these demands are entirely new and betray the Congress characteristic hostility towards the Muslims. An analysis of the resolution passed will amply bear this out.

First, the Congress still harps on the Constituent Assembly talks in terms of an Indian union, and asks 'afresh' the representatives of the Muslim League to join the Constituent Assembly to cooperate 'in this historic undertaking' of expediting the work of framing the Constitution for the Union 'and its constituent units' within the stated period, namely, before June 1948. Secondly, the Congress repeats what has been proved to be untrue, that it has accepted the Cabinet Mission's Scheme of 16 May and the interpretation put upon it by the British Cabinet on 6 December; this is a renewed attempt to put the Muslim League in the wrong. Thirdly, Congress plays with the words 'no compulsion', and tearing the principle out of the context in which it was embodied in the British Statement of 6 December, uses it for the purpose of instigating a 'province or part of a province' to break away from its natural place in the Muslim majority areas and to join the so-called Union. Fourthly, the Congress refers in slighting terms to leaders of the Muslim League in the Punjab describes them as agitators characterizes the recent peaceful movement in the Punjab as an attempt 'to coerce and break popular Ministry', challenges the Muslim League's natural and legitimate claim to assume leadership in provincial Parliamentary politics justifies the undemocratic attitude of Sikhs and Hindus in refusing their cooperation to the League in the provincial administration, and finally records its tacit approval of the 'increased and widespread violence' let loose in the Punjab by opponents of the Muslim League. Fifthly, the Congress advocates the partition of the Punjab into two provinces purely on communal lines and admittedly on the ground that considerable sections of Sikhs and Hindus should be prevented from accepting the position of minority in a Muslim majority province. Sixthly, the Congress demands that power should be transferred immediately and before the date prescribed by HMG to the Interim Government by raising its status and enlarging its powers to those of a dominion Government.

Those who can formulate such demands and express such views even at this eleventh hour cannot be credited with *bona fide* intentions. The talk of a Union Centre and of 'no compulsion' in the same breath lacks even the semblance of good faith. The very conception of an Indian Union in the existing circumstances when large areas of the country are averse to joining any such Union includes an obvious element of coercion and compulsion. But while Congress aims at the compulsion of these areas which are Muslim and which have recognized boundaries, it cannot tolerate the so called compulsion of indeterminate bits and patches of territory inhabited by a majority of non-Muslims and having no recognized territorial entity to continue to May where they are. Then again on the one hand, the Congress says it has accepted the Cabinet Mission's Scheme as interpreted on 6 December, and on the other hand, it wants Punjab to be partitioned, a demand which makes nonsense of the 16 May Scheme. That Scheme takes provinces as a whole and as they exist, and divides them into three groups. Apart from this the latest move of the Congress to split the Punjab into two is mischievous and furnishes fresh proof of the uncompromisingly anti-Muslim attitude of its leaders.

The demand for the elevation of the Interim Government and Dominion Status is nothing short of making the British to transfer power here and now, even before the state of period has elapsed.

It is no secret that ever since the Muslim League entered the Government, the Congress has been ruthlessly abusing its majority in the so-called Cabinet to ride roughshod over the

views of the Muslim League bloc. This attitude has been lately intensified and by the exercise of its brute majority Congress has taken one decision after another to injure Muslim interests over a wide field of administration. To ask that the virtual sovereign powers such as belong to a Dominion Government should be handed over to this kind of a 'Cabinet' is not only begging the whole question of India's constitutional future, wanting Britain to compel the Muslims to surrender themselves to the untender mercies of their sworn enemies.

The British declaration of 20 February as elaborated in behalf of HMG in course of subsequent Parliamentary Debates, provides for the simultaneous transfer of power at the given date to certain provinces or 'combine Government' for such provinces, in case of continued non-agreement between the major parties. If within the next few weeks such frail hopes of an agreement as HMG entertain are finally dissipated, arrangements will have to be taken in hand without further delay of all the assets of the present Central Government for the purpose of allotting their respective shares to each province or combination of provinces to which power is to be separately transferred. The present Interim Government or any Central Government in existence during the transition period cannot be entrusted with that task. It can continue to exist only on the care-taker basis merely carrying on the day to day administration. Such a Government's powers would call for drastic curtailment rather than enhancement, if separate transfer of power to different authorities is to be achieved with equity and fairness. We would go further that an absolutely impartial body like a Royal Commission can alone discharge that stupendous task in the appropriate manner. This attempt of the Congress to establish Akhand Hindustan through the back door by securing immediate transfer of power to an Interim Government packed with its majority is a wicked manoeuvre will be resisted by Muslim India by every means in its power. Besides it is not even sustainable under the Law which in this particular context is the Government of India Act of 1919.

In these circumstances we do not see what good can result from any discussions that may take place between the representatives of the Muslim League and the Congress in pursuance of the Congress Working Committee's 'invitation'.

But that, of course, is for the League High Command to decide. We ourselves see little merit in this pale gesture by the Congress, which has proved by its Working Committee's latest decision that it still remains wedded to its exploded Akhand Hindustan ideology.

22. Arrangements for Transfer of Power: Proposal Brought by Sudhir Ghosh

Note by Secretary of State for India, 12 March 1947
PRO, CAB 134/344, Acc No. 4042, NAI.

Proposals brought by Mr Sudhir Ghosh Note by the Secretary of State for India

I think my colleagues will be interested to see the suggestions by a member of the Interim Government of India embodied in the document at Annex I which was given to me semi-officially by Mr Sudhir Ghosh together with the comments thereon prepared in my department (Annex II)

India Office, S.W.1.

**DOCUMENT HANDED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE BY MR SUDHIR GHOSH ON
10TH MARCH, 1947**

There is growing realization after the announcement of the 20th February, that it may not be possible to have a constitution acceptable to all the parties framed before June 1948. The practical needs of the situation might be met by an approach to the problem of parting with power by Great Britain different from the one contemplated on the basis of the State Paper. Under the State Paper it is contemplated that the whole of the present constitutional structure will be broken up and a new one created by Indians themselves meeting in a Constituent Assembly. Now that a date has been fixed for the final transfer of power from British hands, we have to consider whether the present constitutional structure under the 1935 Act cannot be adapted to the new plan. A rough outline is as follows:

- (1) Parliament should as soon as possible enact a short Bill enabling HM in Council to make suitable amendments to the Government of India Act 1935 to further the object contemplated in the Statement of the 20th February.
- (2) These provisions will be the minimum necessary to secure that full powers will be granted to the Central Government, that the control of Whitehall will no longer be exercised and that the Central Government acts in responsibility to a duly elected Legislature.
- (3) There should be provision specifying the ratio of Muslims in the Executive Council, expressed either as a ratio to Caste Hindu or to the whole Council.
- (4) The Constituent Assembly will be the Central Legislature and the present Legislature will cease to function.
- (5) Legislation affecting exclusively Muslims will require a double majority.
- (6) So far as the States are concerned, provision will be made the accession of States on the Subjects of Defence, External Affairs and Communications on terms to be negotiated between the States and the Central Government. If any States do not accede before June 1948, the functions of Paramountcy insofar as they affect these 3 subjects will be transfer to the Central Government: and the remainder of Paramountcy will revert to the States.
- (7) India will be recognized as a Dominion by an amendment of the Statute of Westminster.
- (8) Emphasis should be laid that his Constitution is only provisional and that it open to Indian to replace it by a Constitution framed by themselves.
- (9) In the provinces the special responsibilities of the Governors will disappear and those functions in which they now act in their discretion will become functions on which they will be aided and assisted by the Ministries.
- (10) European representation in the Provincial Legislatures should go. But this does not necessarily mean that any special representation they might get, for instance, in Commerce and Industry constituencies will disappear.
- (11) A provision should be included in the Provincial Constitution that if 2 or more Provinces desire that they should jointly work for the economic or social uplift of particular regions and work out schemes in this behalf, HM in Council implement such schemes after consultation with the Central Government.

**NOTE ON PROPOSALS HANDED TO THE
SECRETARY OF STATE BY MR SUDHIR GHOSH**

These proposals amount to the transfer of full power during the interim period without any concession to the Muslim League point of view. It is however, an interesting feature of them that they contemplate the grant of full Dominion Status to India, in the interim period, under an amended version of the existing constitution and further contemplate that this constitution would continue after June 1948, because a new constitution could not be framed by that would achieve complete independence as a part of the Common wealth, and might remain in that position for a substantial period.

2. The only safeguards proposed for the Muslims in the proposed interim constitution are:

- (a) A fixed ratio of Muslims in the Executive Council. (This could, of course, be fulfilled by the appointment of non-League Muslims).
- (b) A majority of Muslim votes in the Legislature would be required for legislation 'affecting exclusively Muslims'. (This is much more restrictive than the Cabinet Mission's formula which required a double majority for matters which raise a major communal issue. Legislation affecting exclusively Muslims would only be such matters as the amendment of personal law relating to Muslims).

Moreover, the proposals give to the Congress a Central Legislature (the Constituent Assembly) in which the Hindus have an overwhelming majority based on strict population proportion while the existing Provincial Legislature are, of course, weighted in favour of minorities and, in practice, this is much more advantageous to the Hindus and Sikhs than to the Muslims because the Hindu and Sikhs minorities are a larger proportion of the population Bengal and the Punjab than the Muslims are in any Hindu Province. The Centre would retain the present wide field of central functions, and there would be no devolution of authority from the Central such as is necessary if there is to be any prospect of the Muslims being satisfied.

The proposal contemplates that any states which do not accede to the proposed interim constitution before June, 1948, would become subject to Paramountcy control of the Central Government in respect of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications.

The proposals are thus flatly contrary to the recent Statements of Policy made by HMG, since they amount to putting the Muslim areas under a Central constitution dominated by the Hindu with authority over the whole of the present central field, whereas HMG have said that, if a constitution has been framed by a Constituent Assembly in which the Muslim League are not represented, they would not contemplate forcing such a constitution upon any unwilling parts of the country and will have to consider to whom the power of the Central Government should be handed over on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government or to the existing Provincial Governments, or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people. The proposal in regard to the States is also contrary to the statement that Paramountcy will not be transferred to any Indian Government.

The proposal curiously omit any reference to the Viceroy's position except the statement that the provisions to be made by Order-in-Council should be the minimum necessary to secure that full powers will be granted to the Central Government. This obviously means as the Congress Working Committee has recently stated, that the Viceroy should become a

constitutional monarch. A crucial point which is not mentioned is whether the intention is that the discretionary powers of the Viceroy to control a Governor in the exercise of his special powers should be exercised by the Central Government. Properly speaking, the proposals should not imply that, because paragraph 9 proposes that the discretionary and individual judgment functions of Governors will be exercised on advice. But it seems likely that if there were a breakdown of the Provincial constitution, the Central Government would consider itself entitled to control the Provincial situation.

Item 11 of these proposals is curious and it is not clear what it is intended to provide for. Since the proposals as a whole are intended to eliminate British control, it is odd that it should be proposed that Orders-in-Council should be used to implement schemes agreed upon between Provinces for the economic or social up-lift of particular regions. The Central legislature under Section 103 of the Act has power to legislate within the Provincial Legislative List in respect of two or more Provinces if resolutions requesting it to do so have been passed by all the Chambers of the Legislatures of the Provinces concerned. Unless, therefore, constitutional changes are contemplated, paragraph 11 of the proposals seems to be unnecessary. It may be that this provision is intended to provide for the splitting up of Provinces in order to deal with the communal problem in the Punjab and Bengal. If, however, it is intended to give satisfaction to the Muslims as regards the devolution of power from the Centre to the Muslim areas, it is obviously inadequate.

23. League Working Committee to Meet Soon

Letter from Liaquat Ali Khan to M.A. Jinnah, 13 March 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 237–40.

GUL-I-RAANA, HARDINGE AVENUE, NEW DELHI

My dear Mr Jinnah,

I am sorry I have not written to you for some time. Mumtaz will tell you something of the troubles that I have been facing here, inside the Government. But it is alright [*sic*]. I have got the Congress fellows in a tight corner and I am going to fight to the last ditch. Don't worry about it. It means a great strain but the cause is too great to think of these, little matters. One comes to this world only once and one must do his [*sic*] duty irrespective of what it costs him. I have sent you the keys which you wanted. I hope you have received them. When are you coming to Delhi? I think you should come here as soon as the new Viceroy arrives: It is necessary in my view that you should be available in Delhi as soon as the new Viceroy arrives on the 22nd of this month. Lord Wavell is going away on the 23rd. I think we should call a meeting of the Working Committee early in April. In view of the recent serious developments, I think, a meeting of the Working Committee at an early date is called for. Things are happening all over and the Working Committee should, I think, meet. Your presence here is also necessary because as soon as the new Viceroy arrives, I am sure there will be a number of matters in which your advice and guidance will be necessary.

I got a letter from the Secretary of the Congress sending me the copies of the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee, and requesting that the Muslim League should appoint a Committee to confer with the Committee that may be appointed by the Congress as resolved by the Congress Working Committee. I have replied saying that the letter will be placed before the meeting of the Working Committee of the Muslim League when it meets next.

You must have read in the papers about the movement in the NWFP.¹ They will need some financial help. I just want to know if Pir Sahib of Manki Sharif can help them financially. He wants to know. You know what I mean. You can send me a message saying just yes or no.

There are difficult times ahead. May God help us and may He give you health and strength to guide us. I hope you are feeling fit.

With our kindest regards to both of you and love from children.

Yours sincerely,
LIAQUAT

¹ See Chapter 6 (B)

24. Muslim Unity Essential for Creation of Pakistan

Message from M.A. Jinnah on Pakistan Day, 22 March 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 363–4.

BOMBAY

It was on the 23rd of March 1940 that the All India Muslim League laid down definitely the establishment of Pakistan as the goal of Muslim India. This is the seventh year of our struggle for the realization of that goal.

Every year the Muslim League has forged ahead and gone from strength to strength. Muslim India has stood its tests and trials with wonderful solidarity; Pakistan has been getting nearer and nearer and we are fast reaching in our approach and the realization of it.

The present conditions in India are far from peaceful and everywhere there is terrific tension and unrest. We must, therefore, observe this day strictly in a peaceful manner and in complete co-operation with the authorities and maintain law and order. I urge upon the Musalmans all over India not to insist on taking out processions, or even upon holding public meetings, but every Musalman, wherever he or she is, should observe this day and reaffirm our resolve and determination to achieve our goal of Pakistan.

Pakistan is the only practical solution of India's constitutional problem; Pakistan alone will lead to stable and secure governments in Hindustan and Pakistan and Pakistan alone will guarantee real progress, welfare and happiness of all the peoples inhabiting this vast sub-continent. Pakistan means freedom and independence for Hindu India and Muslim India in their respective homelands where they are predominant. One India is an impossibility. For it can and will only mean the establishment of Hindu Raj—and for Musalmans, merely transfer from British domination to the Hindu Caste Imperialism. A Constitution and Government attempting to function as an All India Central Government, reducing 100 million Muslims to an all-India minority can never succeed but only lead to terrific disasters, for it will mean the rule of one nation with its perpetual and brute majority over another nation of 100 million people.

The only common ground and basis of a settlement is Pakistan, and I do hope that we may yet find a peaceful and amicable solution on that basis.

But one thing is most essential. At this critical moment in the history of Muslim India, we must stand absolutely united, come what may; and let us be ready to carry on our grim struggle and face all dangers and eventualities that may beset our path for the realization of our goal of Pakistan.

I, once more, most earnestly appeal to every Muslim at this moment that he should rally round the banner of the Muslim League—the only authoritative representative organization of Muslim India. We must, for the moment at least, bury the hatchet and whatever domestic differences there may be, we can solve them and settle them ourselves, but on the fundamental issue, I am happy to say that there is no difference of opinion and the Musalmans to a man stand firm for the establishment of Pakistan.

25. Provincial Governments Can Inherit Power if Disagreement Continues at the Centre

Letter from G.H. Hidayatullah to M.A. Jinnah, 22 March 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 360–3.

SECRET

SIND SECRETARIAT, KARACHI

Dear Quaid-i-Azam,

You are aware of the last declaration of His Majesty's Government made in the House of Commons on the 20th February 1947. In that the British Government have made it clear in paragraph 10 that if it should appear that a Constitution approved by the fully representative Constituent Assembly is not possible, His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over: whether as a whole to some form of Central Government in British India or in some *areas to the existing Provincial Governments* or in such other way as may seem reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people.

2. Cripps Offer in 1942, vide para (c) (i) of the declaration, also contemplates that in certain circumstances His Majesty's Government will transfer power to, and enter into treaties with, individual Provinces which would frame their own Constitution.

3. It is very clear from the existing relations between the Congress and the Muslim League that a Constitution framed by a fully representative Constituent Assembly will not be framed [*sic*]; and, therefore, transfer of power as a whole to some form of Central Government in British India is not possible. In that case, transfer of power may, in some areas, be made to the existing Provincial Governments.

4. This declaration of His Majesty's Government and the Cripps Offer, therefore, make it incumbent upon this Provincial Government to be ready to receive powers in case the British Government decide to do so.

5. In paragraph 11 of the declaration of 20th February 1947, they again make it clear that although the final transfer of authority may not take place until June 1948, preparatory measures must be taken in hand in advance. This [Sind] Government must, therefore, take preparatory measures in hand so as to be able to receive the final transference of powers in June 1948 should the British Government decide to do so.

6. In consequence, therefore, my Government have decided to set up a Committee of eight people, consisting of six Muslims and two non-Muslims, to be elected respectively by Muslim and non-Muslim Members of the Sind Legislative Assembly, by the method of proportional representation by a single transferable vote, with the necessary secretariat and office staff, to advise on the action to be taken from time to time to enable the Government of Sind to take over powers from, and enter into a treaty with, His Majesty's Government, and to make

arrangements with other Provinces or parts of India by treaty, Union or otherwise, if and when these questions arise. We propose, for this purpose, to move a Resolution on behalf of this Government in the Sind Legislative Assembly, calling upon the Muslim and non-Muslim Members of the House to elect the members of the above-mentioned Committee.

7. In view of the declaration of His Majesty's Government referred to above, this Government is legally and constitutionally entitled to appoint such a Committee, and it will have the necessary sanction behind it also. The draft Resolution proposed to be moved in the House is attached herewith.

8. The Committee so appointed will have powers to frame a Constitution for the future government of the Province of Sind and also to draft a Constitution for the Union of Provinces or parts of India, should it become possible for the province of Sind to unite with other Provinces or parts of India, for the purpose of administration of common subjects as a single Union or Centre.

9. A provision could also be made for entering into a treaty with His Majesty's Government or other parts of India should such a necessity arise. But we have not drafted the Resolution in those explicit terms and have chosen to use the language as embodied in the draft Resolution for the simple reason that such a decision may come directly in conflict with the powers of the present Constituent Assembly to frame a Constitution for India as well as for Groups and Provinces. We have, therefore, said in the Resolution that the Committee would 'advise on the action to be taken from time to time to enable the Government of Sind to take over power' and other things.

10. It is thus clear that should there be no compromise between the Congress and the Muslim League, and the Congress goes on with the present Constituent Assembly in utter disregard of the Muslim League, the Muslim League will have to set up a Constitution-making body, through its Government in Sind, with all the legal sanctions behind it. The Committee set up by the Government of Sind could be used as a foundation or a starting off place for framing a Constitution for the Western India Pakistan areas.

11. The Sind Legislative Assembly is in session at present and I very much like that we could move this Resolution in the present session; but I realize that, this being a matter of fundamental importance to the Muslim League, it would be necessary to obtain a decision of the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League whether we should move this Resolution. The Working Committee may also consider the language of the draft Resolution. I would therefore request you to place this matter as early as possible before the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League and to get me the necessary direction to move this Resolution in the Sind Legislative Assembly.

12. A similar step could then be taken in Bengal as well.

13. As this is a matter of utmost importance to whole of the Pakistan area in general, and to the future of the Province of Sind in Pakistan in particular, I would request you to invite two persons from Sind, in addition to the Members of the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League, to take part in the deliberations. I think you would ask me and the Premier of Bengal to be better present; but I request that from Sind you may kindly invite Hon'ble Mr Abdus Sattar Pirzada also to attend the meeting of the Working Committee along with us since the whole idea incorporated in this letter has originally been conceived and developed by him.

14. The present session of the Sind Legislative Assembly is to conclude by the end of this month, but should the Working Committee decide to authorize us to move this Resolution, a fresh session of the Assembly would be called forthwith for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,

GHULAM HUSSAIN HIDAYATULLAH

Enclosure

DRAFT OF THE RESOLUTION

This House takes note of HM's Government's announcement of 20th February 1947 and of the Draft Declaration discussed by Sir Stafford Cripps with Indian leaders in March 1942, both of which contemplate that, in certain circumstances, HMG will transfer power to, and enter into treaties with, individual Provinces, which will frame their own constitutions, and in consequence resolves as follows:

That a committee consisting of six Muslims and two non-Muslims, to be elected respectively by the Muslim and non-Muslim Members of this House by the method of proportionate representation by the single transferable vote, be appointed along with the necessary Secretariat and office staff, to advise on the action to be taken from time to time to enable the Government of Sind to take over power from and enter into a treaty with HMG and to make arrangements with other provinces or parts of India by treaty, Union or otherwise, if and when these questions arise.

Chapter 6. Communalism: General

1. 'Gandhiji's Tour Plans Ready'

National Herald, 1 January 1947.

SRIRAMPUR, 31 Dec.—Plans are now ready for Gandhiji's village-to-village walking tour and the details of the tour are being fixed by Mr Satish Chandra Das Gupta.

The United Press of India understands that during his proposed tour, Gandhiji is likely to visit 30 villages which were affected in the recent disturbances.

Gandhiji wants to visit one village daily, spending the night wherever he gets shelter.

He told one of his companions: 'I am prepared to sleep on the way and under the tree if I do not get any shelter in any house during my tour.'

Prior to his departure for Delhi, Acharya Kripalani said to the United Press representative: 'Gandhiji's tour is a fateful tour. It will be a trial of his faith in truth and non-violence. It is significant that he attaches greater importance to his work in East Bengal than what is happening in Delhi and London. I hope that Bapu will succeed in his objective of bringing Hindu-Muslim unity not only in East Bengal but also in the rest of India.'

2. 'Muslims Greet Gandhiji during Tour'

National Herald, 5 January 1947.

CHANDIPUR (Noakhali), 3 Jan.—

Mahatma Gandhi held his prayer meeting yesterday in front of his new residence at 4:30 in the afternoon. After prayer he walked one mile and a half and visited the village Changirgaon where one of his followers is staying and working for peace. On his way Gandhiji met a few Muslims and talked with them. They greeted him and invited him to their houses. Gandhiji accepted their invitation and asked them to fix a day for his prayer. In the conversation it was also decided that the Muslims should read 'miladsharif' after his prayer.

After a while Mahatma Gandhi saw how his followers were working at Changirgaon. This morning Gandhiji met some other Muslims during his walk. In the afternoon he will visit a nearby village and also a place named Tamaltala where he will hold his next evening prayer.

Gandhiji yesterday walked about six miles, three miles in the morning and three miles in the afternoon. He stood the strain well.

'After the journey I slept quite well last night,' said Mahatma Gandhi when he was asked how he slept.

In the morning, Gandhiji visited ten devastated huts and houses, three of which belonged to Namasudra.

As Gandhiji goes to the countryside, men, women and children, Muslims and Hindus, come out of their huts and look at him. An old man of 78 with a bamboo stick, marches in brisk pace and whoever comes his way almost always gets an immediate smiling response. Gandhiji stops and chats with the villagers and already both Hindus and Muslims have started regarding him as their friend. Gandhiji is likely to walk both in the morning and in the evening. In the morning, Gandhiji will walk to the next village and in the evening he will walk and go to the nearby villages.

There he wants to meet people specially the Muslims. By dusk, Gandhiji will return to his cottage and in the morning he will again walk to a new village.—API

3. Strengthen Provincial Units

Circular Letter from General Secretary of All India Hindu Mahasabha, 5 January 1947

AIHM Papers, File No. C-165, NMML.

ALL INDIA HINDU MAHASABHA
READING ROAD, NEW DELHI

Circular Letter No. I

Dear Sir,

Under instruction from the President, I call the attention of all Provincial Hindu Sabhas particularly to two resolutions passed at the Gorakhpur Session, namely, one relating to Hindustan National Guards or Hindustan Rashtra Sena and the other relating to Malviya Hindu Sangathan Fund and request you to take immediate steps to implement these two resolutions.

As regards Hindustan National Guard a Provincial Guard should be established with its branches all over the province and arrangements should be made to drill them into regular soldiers and to train them in all the arts of offence and defence with different kinds of weapons if possible. In this respect the importance, of all the qualities which go to make up a good soldier should be instilled into their minds so that they will be in a position to tackle any situation as a well disciplined corps of National Guards.

As regards the second it need hardly be stated that unless the Head Office is put in possession of sufficiently large fund it will not be possible for it to chalk out lines of the defence of Hindus on a nation-wide scale as it desires to do. The Gorakhpur resolution lays down that out of the total collections made in a province 75 per cent will be utilized by the Head Office. Initially, however, the entire amount collected in a province shall be sent in full to the Head Office in Delhi and the amount due to the Provincial Sabha will subsequently be sent back. In order to make the All India Hindu Mahasabha machinery move with speed and effect, it is necessary that the provinces should start work of collection forthwith.

In order to achieve the above object it will be necessary on the part of the Provincial Hindu Sabha to carry on vigorous and sustained propaganda throughout the provinces on a well organized and well defined plan. It is desirable that the Provincial Hindu Sabha will requisition the services of eminent capable men in their provinces to undertake this work and by the end of March 1947, will be in a position to render satisfactory account of the establishment of the

provincial branch of the Hindustan National Guard and the collection of the Malviya Hindu Sangathan Fund.

While doing the propaganda work emphasis should be laid more on the necessity of these two matters in view of the dangers that face the Hindus and the general ideology of Hindu Mahasabha than on matters of secondary importance. The propagandists should be furnished with notes containing the points which they should urge in their speeches. There should be uniformity of propaganda in the provinces concerned. Earnest efforts should be made to enlist the sympathies and active cooperation and help of all such elements as stand for the Hindu Mahasabha ideology.

The Provincial Hindu Sabhas should appoint study circles which would supply all necessary information as regards the question that are exercising the public mind at present or would do so in future.

In conclusion I must urge that unless and until the Provincial Hindu Sabhas and all their branches take a serious view of the situation and are determined to tackle it satisfactorily it will not be possible for the Head Office to make any headway in the implementation of the Gorakhpur resolution regarding the programme of the work.

Yours faithfully,
Ashutosh Lahiry
GENERAL SECRETARY

4. Pakistan Cannot Be Achieved through Civil War

M.K. Gandhi's Interview to a Muslim Visitor, 12 January 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVI, p. 347.

The visitor had asked which of the two alternatives for a solution of the present situation in India would be preferable—Pakistan or civil war. Gandhiji is reported to have said that he would approach the problem differently. Neither of the two suggested solutions would be good. It was wrong to think that Pakistan could be achieved through civil war....

5. Questions in Legislative Assembly regarding Communal Rioting

22 January 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 22/1/47, NAI.

Question for the Legislative Assembly

Starred D. No. 3

Notice was received on the 14.12.46

Notice of admission to be sent out on the 22.1.47

Department to which the day has been allotted HOME

The question will, if admitted, be put down for the meeting on the: 22.1.47

Mr AHMAD E.H. Jaffer: (a) Will the Ho'nourable the Home Member be pleased to state the number of deaths that have occurred in all India owing to communal rioting since the Interim Government took office on 2nd September?

(b) Will the Home Member also state the number of Hindus and Muslim respectively victims of this rioting?

- (c) Will the Honourable Member be pleased to state the number of victims in each Province?
- (d) Will Government be pleased to state if instructions have been given to the Armed Forces, when firing of riotous crowds, to shoot, to kill or shoot to disperse only?
- (e) Have any bombs been dropped at any time on riotous mobs?

Question for the Legislative Assembly

Starred D. No. 4

Notice was received on the 16.12.46

Notice of admission to be sent out on the 22.1.47

Department to which the day has been allotted HOME

The question will, if admitted, be put down for the meeting on the: 28.1.47

Mr AHMAD E.H. Jaffer: (a) Will the Ho'nourable the Home Member be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether in view of the general Massacre in Bihar and Parts of the UP and other parts of India and in view of the impending spread of this calamity all over the country, Government propose to appoint a strong Committee to consider and make recommendations as regards the exchange of population; and
- (b) whether government have given this matter any consideration at all of late?

Question for the Legislative Assembly

Starred D. No. 5

Notice was received on the 16.12.46

Notice of admission to be sent out on the 22.1.47

Department to which the day has been allotted HOME

The question will, if admitted, be put down for the meeting on the: 28.1.47

Mr AHMAD E.H. Jaffer: (a) Will the Ho'nourable the Home Member be pleased to place on the table a comprehensive report on what has been done to date by Governments of those provinces where there have been grave riots and massacres especially in Bihar, in the matter of rehabilitation and compensation of victims of those riots?

- (b) Have Government been in communication with those Governments in connection with this grave and important matter, and will they be pleased to inform the House in detail of the measures that have been taken?

D. Dis. 40/46 Coorg Chief Commissioner's Office, Mercara, the 10th January 1947

From: Diwan Bahadur K. Chengappa, CIE Chief Commissioner of Coorg

To: The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, New Delhi

Subject: Question for the Legislative Assembly

Sir,

Reference—your letter No. 22/1/47-Poll(I), dated the 3rd January 1947.

2. The information called for in your letter mentioned above in regard to question No. 3 and 5 is furnished below:

Starred Question D. No. 3.

- (a) No communal rioting occurred in Coorg.
- (b) to (e). Do not arise.

Starred Question D. No. 5

- (a) No riots and massacres occurred in Coorg.
- (b) Does not arise.

for Chief Commissioner

Government of Orissa
Home Department
Special Section
No. 87

From
B.C. Mukharji, Esqr ICS,
Chief Secretary to Government

To
The Secretary to the Government of India,
Home Department
Dated, Cuttack, the 11th January 1947

Subject: Central Legislative Assembly Question D. Nos. 3 and 5 asked by Mr A.E.H. Jaffer about the number of deaths owing to Communal riots and other things.

Sir,

With reference to Mr Bedekar's Express Letter No. 22/1/47-Poll(I), dated the 3rd January 1947, on the above subject, I am directed to say that there have been no communal riots in Orissa since the 2nd September 1946 up to date.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,
B.C. Mukharji
Chief Secretary to Government

Printed at the Central Jail Press, Lahore
Government of Punjab
Dept of
Office

Express Letter

[N.B.—This is an Original Message sent by post to save telegraphic expenses and undue use of the wires, but intended to be treated on receipt with the same expedition as if it had been telegraphed. To save time and formalities it is worded and signed as if it had been so despatched.]

From

Punjab Lahore

To

Homex New Delhi

No. 904-CDSB

Dated 15th January 1947

Reference your express letter no. 22/1/47-Poll(I) dated 3.1.1947.

2. The answers to Question starred D-3 are:

- (a) there have been 48 deaths in the Punjab owing to communal riots in the period from 2-9-46 to date.
- (b) Hindu victims total 25 and Muslim victims 23;
- (c) 48 in the Punjab;
- (d) the instructions to the Police and to troops employed in aid of the Civil power are that whatever volume of fire may have to be ordered, it should be employed with the maximum of effect; and
- (e) no bombs have been dropped on riotous mobs.

In regard to the answer against (a), it is suggested that the Government of India might consider whether it would not be better to refuse to divulge information as to the number of casual ties incurred by each community, since to do so is likely to inflame communal passions, and it is probable that there will be a spate of supplementary questions.

3. The answer to Question starred D-5(a) is that matters connected with the rehabilitation and compensation of the victims of the riots which have occurred since 2-9-46 are being dealt with as and when recommendations are received from District officers.

Akhtar Hussain
Chief Secretary to Government,
Punjab

No. A/26-2.

Chief Commissioner's Office
Dated Ajmer, the 15th January 1947

To

Homex, New Delhi

Mr A.E.H. Jaffer's question D. Nos. 3 and 5 in the Legislative Assembly.

Reference: the Home Department Express letter no. 22/1/47-Poll(I) dated the 3rd January 1947

2. Since there have been no communal riots in Ajmer-Merwara, the answer to questions Nos. 3(a), (b), (c) and (e) and to question no. 5 is blank.

3. As for question No. 3(d), No special orders have been issued to the Armed Forces who are expected to act according to the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Chief Commissioner
Ajmer-Merwara

Very Urgent
No. L.A. 40/A

Government of Sind
Home Department (Special)
Sind Secretariat, Karachi, 18th January 1947

To
The Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, New Delhi

Subject: Mr A.E.H. Jaffer's Assembly Questions.

Reference you express letter no. 22/1/47-Poll(I), dated the 3rd January 1947, on the subject noted above.

2. I am directed to state that as there have been no communal riots in Sind recently, replies to Mr A.E.H. Jaffer's questions D. Nos. 3 and 5 are blank so far as this province is concerned.

A.B. Hannah
Assistant Secretary to Government

CONFIDENTIAL
942

TELEGRAM GRADE 'C'

From ... Baluchistan Sibi
To ... Homex New Delhi

No. 12 S
Dated 20th (& recd. 21st January) 1947

T.O.O. 1740
T.O.R. 0715

Your express letter No. 22/1/47-Poll(I) 3rd January. Replies to Jaffar's Question *D No. 3 as follows:

(a)-(c)* nil (d) same* instructions in force as throughout India (e) no. question No. 8 does not arise.

Asstt Secy Home Deptt (3)

CONFIDENTIAL
966

TELEGRAM GRADE 'C'

From ... Bombay Special Bombay
To ... Home New Delhi

No. 13
Dated: & Received 21st January 1947

T.O.O. 2100
T.O.R. 2245

IMMEDIATE

Reference to your express letter dated 3rd January regarding Mr Jaffers question Nos. 3 and 5.

Regarding question no. 3 is as follows: Clauses (a), (b) and (c)—total number of deaths in this province 904 out of whom 449 were Hindus 440 Muslims and 15 others. Replies to clauses (d) and (e) are in negative. As regards question No. 5 Communal riots on pattern of NOAKHALI and Bihar occurred in this province on smaller scales only in KOLABA district where in all 316 houses and 100 CATTLE sheds were destroyed. Total damage not yet estimated. So far Government has sanctioned Rs 25,000 for grant of gratuities to sufferers, free grant of timber, other than teak, worth Rs 200 to each and Rs 30,000 for granting TAGAI loans under Agriculturist Loans Act free of interest to agriculturists rendered destitute. Free grant of teak wood posts in under consideration.

Secy and Home Deptt (2) Cabinet Secy
22nd January 47

EXPRESS LETTER

[N.B.—This is an ORIGINAL MESSAGE, sent by post to save telegraphic expense and undue use of the wires, but intended to be treated, on receipt, with the same expedition as if it had been telegraphed. To save time and formalities it is worded and signed as if it had been so despatched]

From R. Dayal Esqr, ICS
Secretary to Government

To
Homex
New Delhi

No. 116-Z/VIII-1026-47

Dated: Lucknow, Jan. 18, 1947

Reference Mr Bedekar's Express letter No. 22/1/47-Poll (1) dated 3 January, 1947 regarding the questions asked by Mr A.E.H. Jaffer in the Legislative Assembly.

Necessary information is furnished in the enclosed sheet.

R. Dayal
Secretary

Answer to Assembly Questions Nos. 3–5 asked by Mr Jaffer.

3. (a) The number of deaths owing to communal rioting in the United Provinces since 2 September, 1946 is 465 (approximately);
- (b) The number of Hindu and Muslim victims is 257 and 850 respectively (approximately);
- (c) The total number of victims is 1107 (approximately in the United Provinces;
- (d) No such instructions have been given by the Provincial Government;
4. (e) No bombs have been dropped on riotous mobs in this province.
5. An amount of over one lakh has been sanctioned by this government for compensation to the sufferers and destitute of the communal riots at Garhmukteshewar and other connected

places. Kuchcha and pucca houses destroyed during the riots will be re-built or repaired. Grants have been given to the destitutes to resume their business and fishermen to purchase yarn for their fishing nets. In all places where serious riots have occurred compensation has been assessed and paid under the provisions of the Police Act of 1861. Additional police has also been imposed in the disturbed areas of the Meerut district and in Agra, Allahabad, Bareilly and Benaras districts where also riots took place.

Assam Schedule V, Form No. 4
[Revised, 1942]

Express

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

Home Department Police Branch
No. HPL 6/47/4, dated Shillong, the 17th January 1947

From

Sir Harold Dennehy, CSI, CIE, ICS,
Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam

To

The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department

Subject: Questions (starred) to be asked by Mr A.E.H. Jaffer in the Central Legislative Assembly regarding Communal riots in India.

Reference: Mr G.V. Bedekar's letter No. 22/1/47-Poll (1) of 3.1.47

Sir,

I am directed to forward herewith the particulars called for in the letter under reference.

3. (a) None
(b) None
(c) None
(d) No instructions have been given beyond those which are contained in the Police Manual.
(e) No.
4. (a) There has been no such occurrence in Assam.
(b) No.
5. (a) There has been no occasion for such action
(b) No.

I am to explain that the only clashes in Assam have been of an agrarian nature.

I have the honour to be,
sir,

Your obedient servant
Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam.

Government of the Central Provinces and Berar
Central Administration Department

Express Delivery

EXPRESS LETTER

[N.B.—This is an ORIGINAL MESSAGE, sent by post to save telegraphic expense and undue use of the wires, but intended to be treated, on receipt, with the same expedition as if it had been telegraphed. To save time and formalities it is recorded and signed as if it had been so despatched]

From

CP Nagpur

To

Homex, New Delhi

No. 269-76-II

Dated 20th January, 1947

Reference your express letter No. 22/1/47-Poll(I), dated the 3rd January 1947. Information in regard to Mr A.E.H. Jaffer's questions D. Nos. 3 and 5 in the Legislative Assembly is enclosed.

Addl. Under Secretary

No. 63

Public (General A) Department

From

K. Ramunni Menon, Esq CIE, ICS, Additional Chief Secretary to Government.

To

The Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, New Delhi

Dated, Fort St. George, the 17th January 1947

Sir,

Riots and disturbances—Communal—Hindu Muslim—Number of Victims.

Ref: Government of India, Home Department, Express letter No. 22/1/47, Poll(I) dated the 3rd January 1947.

I am directed to furnish the following information with reference to Mr A.E.H. Jaffer's questions D. Nos. 3 and 5 in the Legislative Assembly, so far as the Madras Province is concerned:

Question D. No. 3:

(a) Number of deaths that have occurred during the period 2-9-1946 to 15-1-1947.

	Hindus	Muslims	Total
(i) Owing to Communal Clashes	1	1	2
(ii) As a result of Police opening fire to suppress communal rioting	2	2	4
Total			6

(b) Number of Victims

- (i) Hindus 3
- (ii) Muslims 3

(d) Instructions have been given to the armed forces to open fire as a last resort and to see that not only is it sufficiently effective, but that the populace also knows that it will be so.

(f) No bombs were dropped at any time on riotous mobs.

Question D. No. 5:

As there have been no grave riots or massacres in this Province both clauses (a) and (b) of this question do not arise so far as this Province is concerned.

Your obedient servant
for Addl. Chief Secretary to Government.

Express Letter

From

A.A. Said, Esquire, MA LLB. (Cantab), Bar-at-Law, Home Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Delhi

To

The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, New Delhi

No. F. 2(7)/47-R. & J.

Dated Delhi, the 22nd January 1947

Kindly refer to Mr Bedekar's express letter no. 22/1/47-Poll(1), dated the 3rd January 1947, asking for material for reply to the proposed questions in the Legislative Assembly by Mr Ahmed E.H. Jaffer, regarding the statistics of deaths during the recent communal riots. The information asked for is given below:

Question D. No. 3.

- (a) 30 in Delhi Province.
- (b) Hindus and Sikhs. ...11
- (c) Muslims. ...19
- (d) As above.
- (e) No such orders were issued.
- (f) No.

2. This Administration is unable to comment on starred questions D. Nos. 4 and 5.

(A.A. Said)
Home Secretary
to the Chief Commissioner, Delhi



6. Muslims Fear Further Attacks

Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to M.K. Gandhi, 30 January 1947
SWJN, Vol. I, pp. 110–11.

New Delhi

Dear Bapu,

Thank you for your letter of January 26th.

...I am quite sure that your visit to and tour in Noakhali District has great significance and importance. It is not for me to suggest to you to go against your own inclination. You are the best judge. What I had ventured to put to you however, and would like to repeat, is that conditions all over India to some extent are very unsatisfactory. There is a certain disruptive tendency at work which affects our work in every direction. The whole Congress organization is suffering from it and we, who are in the Government, have no time at all to give to any work except the immediate problems which confront us. It is difficult to write much in a letter. But I want you to realize that there is in some ways a progressive deterioration in the situation and I feel very unhappy about it. I would not mind so much any number of what I would call external problems however difficult they might be. But when our own approach is not quite clear and there are different viewpoints and pulls, then it becomes even more difficult to deal with any problems.

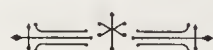
I know what we must learn to rely upon ourselves and not run to you for help on every occasion. But we have got into this bad habit and we do often feel that if you had been easier of access our difficulties would have been less.

I am worried about Bihar. I made it quite clear to some of the Ministers there that they must ask for a Commission of Inquiry or appoint it themselves even if the Bengal Government got out of it. I thought they had agreed, but nothing has been done since. I do not know the reason for this, and I am writing to Sri Babu about it.

I have a feeling, for which I have no proof whatever, that there is no strong desire for an inquiry. The Bihar Government anyhow moves slowly. The Government has done a great deal in giving relief and yet it has not done it in the right way and hence the psychological results achieved have not been great. There is a sense of fear and apprehension among the Muslim population. Badshah Khan passed through Delhi the other day and I met him. I did not have time to talk to him about Bihar, but I understand that he is not at all happy at what he found there.

I have found both in Bihar and elsewhere very little regret or remorse among the Hindus for what happened there. There is a feeling almost of justification. Among the Muslims there is definitely a fear, whether justified or not, that there might be further attacks on them.

In Hazara in the NWFP some horrible things were done, though, of course, in point of extent and numbers there is no comparison whatever with Bihar. In quality or lack of it there is little to choose, in my mind, between Noakhali, Bihar, Meerut District and Hazara. They all represent utter degradation and depravity....



7. Twenty-seventh Session of the All India Hindu Mahasabha

Extract from the Resolutions Passed at Gorakhpur, c. January 1947

Ashutosh Lahiry Papers, Pamphlet, Serial No. 26, NMML.

Gorakhpur Session

The 27th session of the All India Hindu Mahasabha held at Gorakhpur on the 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th December, 1946 under the Presidentship of Shree L.B. Bhopatkar was unique in many respects. It is for the first time in the history of the Hindu Mahasabha that the session was held for four days. The number of delegates and visitors present at the session beat all previous records—over four thousand delegates attended, Bihar alone contributing about one thousand. Not less than one lakh of persons attended each day—Malaviyanagar in a part of which a full size bust of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji was erected attracted a huge crowd and the beautiful bust was the cynosure of all eyes.

The Presidential Procession, with its imposing array of elephants and horses, wending its way round the city's dusty maze of lanes, thoroughfares and bazars created a most impressive spectacle. And the whole of Gorakhpur turned out either to participate in, or to witness it.

The Pandal itself was very beautifully decorated. The President was seated on a golden throne which had two miniature lions on either side. Richly embroidered red velvet was spread on it, and overhead was a canopy which was supported on silver poles. The throne with the canopy and the poles made the show at once brilliant and magnificent.

The session itself was remarkable for its tremendous outburst of emotion. The speeches on the Noakhali resolution evoked a most touching scene. Almost the whole house was in tears. The resolution on Bihar happenings so deeply stirred the audience that one of them ran up to the dais and painted the forehead of one of the speakers with his own blood, as a mark of appreciation of the heroic deeds of Bihar. A gold ring donated by a Bengal delegate was put to auction and was sold at rupees three thousand. A deer skin presented by a Sanyasi fetched the fancy price of rupees ten thousand. These were enough indications of the very high pitch to which emotions were roused. The highlight of the session was the formulation of a constructive programme embodied in a resolution on the 4th day with a view to canalise the energies of the vast concourse of the assembled, Hindus into a fruitful channel. The initiation of the Hindusthan National Guard and the inauguration of the Malaviya Hindu Sangathan Fund were the two most important planks in this constructive programme.

The Hindu Mahasabha has now emerged greatly strengthened, with the popular backing of the Hindu masses, and Gorakhpur has given a fitting reply to Jinnah's challenge to Hindu life, culture and civilization.

Ashutosh Lahiry

General Secretary

ALL INDIA HINDU MAHASABHA

.... RESOLUTION NO. II

NOAKHALI TRAGEDY

The shocking events which took place in the district of Noakhali began on the 10th October and ultimately covered an area of about 250 sq miles in the Sub-division of Chandpur in the

district of Tipperah and in four police stations in the district of Noakhali, Begumganj, Ramganj, Raipur and Lakhipur. They followed the Great Calcutta Killing which was the consequence of the 'Direct Action' declared by the Muslim League. The calculated brutalities were instigated and planned by the League and the same were enacted with the connivance and encouragement of the local authorities. The brutalities went on unchecked in East Bengal for days resulting in the riotous and armed mobs murdering prominent Hindu leaders like Rajendra Lal Ray, President, Noakhali District Hindu Mahasabha and in the massacre of the adult male population of a number of families in the disturbed area. Organized hooliganism resulted in the looting and burning of thousands of Hindu houses, the callous destruction of Hindu properties worth crores of rupees and the forcible mass conversion of about one hundred thousand people and the sufferers included thousands of Hindus belonging to scheduled castes.

The tragic feature of this outburst of wanton brutality was the outrage on women, mass conversion and abduction and forcible marriages.

The interior of the affected areas, specially in the district of Noakhali, was made inaccessible for days and the surviving Hindus who had been forcibly converted were marooned and were not allowed to come out of their villages except with permit of the local League leaders and they were subjected to assaults and humiliating treatment.

This carnage and outburst of hooliganism were due to the communal policy adopted by the Muslim League Ministry in Bengal.

The price which thousands of innocent people had to pay to the hooligans for their lives was the sacrifice of their religion and substantial sums of money were extorted as subscriptions for the Muslim League and as conversion fees for the Moulavis. Not one single Hindu temple or 'Devasthan' escaped desecration in the affected area and the mass attackers and looters knew that however brutally they would behave they would enjoy complete immunity.

The Governor of Bengal as well as the local officials were warned of the intending catastrophe but they took no steps and most of the officers who had connived are still continuing in office inspite of the protests of the public.

The task of rehabilitation or repatriation of the thousands of Refugees from Noakhali and Tipperah has been rendered almost impossible due to the fact that murderers, abductors and looters and perpetrators of these outrages have not been punished and some of them are still going about in the villages in a defiant mood.

The calamity which has befallen Noakhali is likely to spread to other areas in the Hindu minority districts in Bengal. The Hindu Mahasabha deplores that the Governor-General of India and the Governor of Bengal who had special responsibilities for the protection of the minority community failed miserably to discharge their obligations. The Mahasabha also deplores that no action was taken by the Interim Government in order to protect the minority community in the districts of Tipperah and Noakhali, although some prominent members of the same Government took conspicuous part in taking drastic action against the Hindus in Bihar and in giving protection to the Muslim minority in that Province.

There has been a welcome sign of new consciousness among the Hindus throughout Hindustan but this consciousness must be transmuted into constructive work for the preservation and emancipation of the Nation. In order to prevent the recurrence of such outrages and brutalities and in view of the failure and apathy on the part of the Government to discharge their primary duty of maintaining law and order, this All-India Hindu Mahasabha declares that the Muslim League Ministry has forfeited its right to carry on the administration

of Bengal and that the following steps should be taken to prevent mass persecution and torture of the Hindus:

- (a) that in order to inspire confidence among the Hindus in Hindu minority districts there should be settlements of Hindus of those districts in convenient localities at the expense of the Government;
- (b) that suitable arrangements should be made for the security of such Hindu settlements and the maintenance of the economic and cultural life of the people in such settlements;
- (c) that full compensation should be given to Hindus in the affected areas in Bengal and punitive taxes should be imposed on the aggressive community;
- (d) that a Hindu Militia or National Guard be formed for organizing the defence of Hindus so as to make them repel all aggression and to secure the protection of their culture and religion;
- (e) that every Hindu woman should carry a dagger and should learn the art of self-defence;
- (f) that although it is a matter of satisfaction that thousands of Hindus who were forcibly converted have been rescued and most of the women who were forcibly abducted and married have been recovered and they have been treated as Hindus and honourably accepted by their relations, strong efforts should be made for the rescue of those girls who have not yet been recovered;
- (g) that Hindu society must purge itself of all disabilities and discriminations imposed on any caste or section and intensify true sangathan or consolidation of all classes and sections of the Hindus.
- (h) that a Committee consisting of five persons to be nominated by the President, be appointed to carry out the constructive suggestions made above and to report to the Working Committee within three months.

Moved by:	N.C. Chatterjee.
Seconded by:	Dr Gokul Chand Narang.
Supported by:	D.V. Gokhale.
	Rani Shaheba of Sherkote
	Chand Karan Sarda.
	Debendranath Mookerjee. (Bengal)
	Karam Chand. (Delhi)
	V. Mahalingalyar. (Andhra)
	Hanuman Pd. Poddar. (Gorakhpur)
	Mohant Digvijayanath Ji.

RESOLUTION NO. III

FRONTIER DEPREDATIONS

This Session of the All India Hindu Mahasabha strongly condemns the depredations including loot, arson and murder of innocent Hindus including women and children of Hazara District by the Trans-Border raiders assisted by local ruffians. It conveys its whole-hearted sympathy to the victims of these outrages and their families. While placing on record its deep appreciation of the sympathy and help extended by some good hearted persons to their Hindu neighbours,

this Session urges upon the Frontier Government the imperative necessity of putting an immediate stop to the campaign of bitter communal hatred carried on by the agents of the Muslim League in the length and breadth of Frontier Province and the Tribal area, which has led to these outrages and the Mahasabha also calls upon the Central Government to take such steps as may put an end for ever to the raids so frequently committed by the tribesmen into British India. The Mahasabha also expects that adequate relief will be given to the sufferers and necessary steps will be taken by the Frontier Government to restore peace and confidence in the areas concerned to enable the Hindus to return to their homes.

The Mahasabha also appreciates the action of the Kashmere Durbar in allowing the Hindu refugees from the Hazara District to take shelter in Jammu and Kashmere States and affording them necessary facilities.

Proposed by – Captain Keshab Chandra,
Seconded by – Ram Nath Kalia.

RESOLUTION NO. IV

KIRPAN

This Session of the All India Hindu Mahasabha strongly condemns the ban imposed by the Muslim League Government of Bengal on the carrying of Kirpans by the Sikhs, which is their rightful religious symbol. It is a direct encroachment on the religious rights of a minority community and a challenge to them. This ban has deeply wounded the feelings of the Sikhs of the whole of India and this Session requests the Bengal Government to withdraw the ban.

Moved by – Sardar Sir Surender Singh Majithia.
Seconded by – Lala Narayan Dutt (Delhi).
 ,, – Pandit Raghavacharya Sastri (Bihar).

RESOLUTION NO. V

BIHAR DISTURBANCES

The All India Hindu Mahasabha repudiates the statements made that the Hindu masses of Bihar instead of giving protection to their minority neighbours have taken advantage of their majority position in committing all kind of aggressions on their Muslim neighbours such as loot, arson and murder and they have thus disgraced the name of the Hindus. The fact is that though agitated over reports of Moslem atrocities on the Hindu men, women, and children in Bengal and particularly in Noakhali they maintained their innate patience and peace of mind, and did not rise up to strike until they repeatedly received grave provocations and challenges from Muslim Leaguers presumably in accordance with their Direct Action plan, such as killing of cows, molestation of young women, desecration of idols, arson, loot and firing.

The Mahasabha disapproves the policy of appeasement of Muslims by the Government of Bihar which allowed Muslims from outside to complicate the situation, unduly favoured the Muslims in the matter of giving relief from public exchequer as if they were the State guests, made discrimination in granting licences for firearms, making arrests and granting bails and permitted unauthorized occupation of Government and Municipal land and building. The Hindu Mahasabha warns the Government against the dangers of the latest move of the Muslim League to create Muslim corridor between Bengal and the Punjab by transference of population in and outside Bihar.

The Hindu Mahasabha condemns the unwarranted firing by the Military and Police which was encouraged by leaders like Pt Jawahar Lal Nehru and was indiscriminate and aggressive in places, such as Nagarnausa, as well as atrocities committed on Hindus in some villages by the Military which was composed mostly of Muslims.

In the interest of the peace of the country as a whole and in justice to all, the Hindu Mahasabha appeals to the Government of Bihar to unconditionally release the Hindus who are innocent, see to it that they are not harassed, rehabilitate and fully compensate such of them as have suffered and make the path easy for the restoration of peace and good-will among the people.

The Hindu Mahasabha pays its tribute to all Hindus of Bihar who have acted courageously and shown bravery in self-defence.

Proposed by	1. Kumar Ganganand Sinha.
Seconded by	2. Dr Moonje.
„	3. Kumar Suresh Prakash Sing.
„	4. Pt R.K. Tripathi.
„	5. Bindeshweri Prasad Singh.
„	6. Bodh Narain Pershad.
„	7. Pt Viswanath Shastri.

RESOLUTION NO. VI

MINORITY HINDUS

The Mahasabha places on record the emphatic determination of the representative Hindus assembled here that the Hindus of the majority Provinces will not tolerate any outrage on their co-religionists, particularly on those in Hindu minority Provinces.

Proposed by	– Muneshwar Singh.
Seconded by	– Shibendu Sekhar Roy. (Bengal)
„	– Vidya Bhikshu. (Lucknow)
„	– Kaviraj Shivnath Vaid. (Delhi)
„	– Pt Rajendramani Sastri. (UP)

RESOLUTION NO. VII

CONSTITUTION OF FREE HINDUSTHAN

- (1) This Session of the All India Hindu Mahasabha re-affirms the resolution passed at the Bilaspur Session which is based on the cardinal principle of democracy namely One man one vote, and joint electorate.
- (2) The basic features of the constitution of Free Hindustan for which the Hindu Mahasabha always stood and still stands are:
 - (a) Strong and paramount centre;
 - (b) Constitutional right of the centre to supervise and intervene in the Provinces in case of emergencies;
 - (c) Safeguards for the protection of minorities, their religion and culture;
 - (d) Provinces must not be vested with residuary powers;
- (3) The tragic experiences of Noakhali and other places have demonstrated beyond doubt that that the stand of the Hindu Mahasabha is correct and is essential in the interest of the country.

- (4) The Hindu Mahasabha reiterates the decision arrived at Delhi by its All India Committee on 16th June, 1946 with regard to the Cabinet Mission Scheme pointing out the vital changes essential to make it acceptable to the Hindus, namely:
 - (a) Though in name unity and integrity of India have been accepted in practice the same has been whittled down;
 - (b) The complicated machinery which seeks to set up a three-decker constitution and which would place the Hindus of Punjab, Bengal, Assam, Sind, NWFP as well as Sikh community at the mercy of Pakistanists.
 - (c) The Hindu Mahasabha is opposed to parity and the Central Executive must be based on the population ratio,
- (5) The Hindu Mahasabha condemns the recent interpretation of 6th December 1946 of His Majesty's Government by which Jinnah's demands of compulsory grouping as sine qua non of Pakistan is being conceded and the country is sought to be plunged in further civil strife and discord.
- (6) The British Cabinet has gone back on its previous declaration that the minority will not be allowed to veto the progress of the majority. It has now announced that any constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly will not be imposed on any unwilling part of the country and at the same time compelled the people of Assam, Punjab, Frontier, and Bengal to submit to compulsory grouping against their will.
- (7) The Hindu Mahasabha administers a note of warning that if the Congress accepts the recent interpretation by His Majesty's Government in order to placate the League it would be betrayal of the interests of the millions of masses of Hindustan who would never submit to it.
- (8) While appreciating the general tenour of Pt Jawahar Lal Resolution in respect of the objectives of the Constituent Assembly which are on the general lines of the Hindu Mahasabha ideal as embodied in the Bilaspur Resolution, the Hindu Mahasabha takes strong exception to conceding Residuary Powers to the Provinces and hold that by so doing the Provinces will be made virtually independent. The Mahasabha, therefore, puts on record its strong opposition to it.
- (9) The Hindu Mahasabha declares that Hindu India will not accept any Constitution which will be based on the basis of trunked Centre and virtual independence of the Provinces on which basis the Congress is attempting to frame the future constitution of India.
- (10) The Hindu Mahasabha warns all sections of the people from whom sovereignty is derived and sanction to frame a constitution is obtained that they should realize the dangers ahead.
- (11) The Hindu Mahasabha calls upon all Hindu Sabhas throughout India to mobilize public opinion effectively so that it may be impossible for the Constituent Assembly to frame a Constitution which will install Pakistan in any shape or form.

Proposed by – Dr B.S. Moonje.

Seconded by – V.G. Deshpande.

„ – K.H. Dhamdhare.

„ – Indra Prakash.

„ – Mukund Malaviya.

„ – Pindi Dass.

Seconded by – Gopi Nath Kunzru.
 „ – Bankim Chandra Mookerjee.
 „ – Nathu Ram Godse.
 „ – Hardayal Debgun.
 „ – Sardar Ganesha Singh

... RESOLUTION NO. X

CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

In view of the political developments that have recently taken place resulting in outbursts of Muslim aggression and fanaticism in several parts of India, it is imperative that the Hindus should organize themselves on the following lines, namely:

- (1) To start a Hindu National Army styled as Hindusthan National Guards or Hindusthan Rastra Sena. The All India Working Committee do organize the same and the Provincial Sabhas do take necessary action under the directions of the All India Working Committee and to train them in the arts of self-defence,
- (2) To take all possible steps to make the Hindus more Hindu-minded and militant,
- (3) To start common prayer on some fixed day in a week,
- (4) To start rescue homes and orphanages for the helpless Hindus,
- (5) To make the Hindus economically self-reliant by supporting the Hindu traders, artisans, workers and peasants and industrialists,
- (6) To relax the rigour of caste system as far as possible,
- (7) For the above purpose to start immediately a fund called the 'Malaviya Hindu Sangathan Fund' in each Province, providing the Working Committee with 25 per cent of the collections made by the Provincial Hindu Sabhas and retaining 75 per cent for their work in their Provinces.

Proposed by – B.G. Khaparde.
 Seconded by – Hanuman Pd. Poddar.
 „ – Ashutosh Lahiry.
 „ – Mohant. Digbijaynathji.
 „ – Gangaram Khanna.
 „ – Ram Ktishna Pande.

RESOLUTION NO. XI

MUSLIM NATIVE STATES

This Session of the All India Hindu Mahasabha views with pain the continuance of the many irritating restrictions imposed on the culture and religious observances and the language of the Hindus in the States of Hyderabad, Bhopal, Junagarh and Bhawalpur. The Mahasabha condemns the attempt now being made to introduce in those States political reforms in which Moslem subjects are being given undue weightage or parity with Hindus though they happen to be in small minority.

Proposed by – Ananda Priyaji.
 Seconded by – Yaswant Rao Joshi.

RESOLUTION NO. XII

This Mahasabha reiterates its condemnation of the ban imposed on Satyarth Prakash by the Muslim League Ministry in Sind and demands its immediate withdrawal.

(From the Chair.)

RESOLUTION NO. XIII

HINDU STATES

The Hindu Mahasabha notes with regret and resentment that in the name of Responsible Government and with the object of introducing it in the States, trouble is being created in the Hindu States particularly, and practically excluding all Muslim States such as Hyderabad, Bhopal, Rampur and others, leading eventually even to subversive activities in Kashmere and Travancore and notes with satisfaction that such activities have been so far put down by their respective Hindu Rulers. The Hindu Mahasabha offers them its hearty congratulations and assures them of its support in their fight against the pro-Muslim tendency of the Congress.

(From the Chair.)

... RESOLUTION NO. XV

EAST ASIATIC CONFERENCE

The Hindu Mahasabha calls upon the Hindus to create and organize a Pan-Hindu front by pooling all the cultural and religious sympathies and affinities in East Asiatic countries and resolves to organize for the purpose an East Asiatic Conference composed of Buddhists and Hindus and other similar sects residing in Nepal, Burma, Siam, China and Japan. The Hindu Mahasabha calls upon the Working Committee to take steps for organizing such a Conference.

(From the Chair.)

RESOLUTION NO. XVI

AMENDMENT TO HINDU UNIVERSITY ACT.

Having regard to the fact that there is an attempt in Muslim majority Provinces to Islamise education and to deprive schools founded and run by Hindus, of necessary facilities, the Central Legislature be requested to amend the Hindu Universities Act in such a way that the Benares Hindu University may be given unfettered power to affiliate Hindu schools and Colleges and hold examinations locally in the Hindu minority Provinces.

(From the Chair.)

RESOLUTION NO. XVII

SHUDDHI

In view of the fact that there are millions of Hindus converted to other faiths who are anxious to come to the fold of Hinduism, the faith of their fore-fathers, this Session of the Hindu Mahasabha resolves that the movement of Shuddhi be intensified and each Provincial Sabha do submit quarterly report to the All India Working Committee regarding the progress made in implementing this Resolution.

(From the Chair.)

RESOLUTION NO. XVIII

ASSAM

The All India Hindu Mahasabha stands by Assam in her bold and fearless refusal to be forced into Pakistan and to be forced into compulsory grouping with Bengal against her will. All sections of Nationalists should support the demand of the people of Assam and help her by all legitimate means.

(From the Chair.)

RESOLUTION NO. XIX

The Hindu Mahasabha strongly protests against the grave injustice being done to Hindus in Congress governed Provinces as well as in other Provinces in respect of Public Services. It earnestly urges upon the Governments concerned, particularly in Congress governed Provinces that numerical strength of communities as well as qualifications should be kept in view in making appointments and serious disparities in existing personnel should be rectified as early, as possible.

(From the Chair.)

RESOLUTION NO. XX

This meeting of the All India Hindu Mahasabha records that in as much as Hindus of Sind have no confidence in the Muslim League Ministry of that Province and as Hindus have suffered greatly under the Muslim League regime and as Governor of Sind has failed to protect the Economic, Cultural and Political rights of Hindus who are in minority, Sind be re-annexed to the Province of Bombay.

This meeting strongly protests against the attempts made by the Muslim League Ministry of Sind in inviting Moslems of other Provinces to reside in Sind, in order to convert it into a complete Pakisthan Province.

(From the Chair.)

RESOLUTION NO. XXI

AGRA AND OUDH AMALGAMATION

In the opinion of the All India Hindu Mahasabha it is not desirable to continue the artificial division of U. P. into two Provinces of Agra and Oudh any more, wherefore the two Provincial Sabhas of Agra and Oudh are hereby amalgamated into one U. P. Provincial Hindu Sabha with its Head Office at Lucknow....

Resolved further that Sjt Bhopatkar, President, All India Hindu Mahasabha, Dr S.P. Mukherjee and Dr Moonje are authorized to appoint an Adhoc Committee to work as U.P. Provincial Hindu Sabha for the current year 1946-47.

(From the Chair.)



8. All-India Muslim League Session at Karachi.

Text of the Resolution Passed by the Working Committee, 2 February 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 33/7/47, NAI.

KARACHI NO. EIGHT

(FIRST RESOLUTION)

(GENERAL)

KARACHI

THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE ALL INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE HAVE NOTED WITH DISMAY AND INDIGNATION THAT THE GOVERNMENTS AND OFFICIALS OF CONGRESS GOVERNED PROVINCES HAVE NOT ONLY FAILED TO PROTECT THE LIFE AND PROPERTY OF MUSSALMANS IN THESE PROVINCES AS IS EVIDENCED BY THE CONTINUED DAILY STABBINGS OF THE MUSSALMANS OF THE CITY OF BOMBAY AND AHMEDABAD FOR OVER FIVE MONTHS AND THE MASSACRE OF THE MUSSALMANS AT GARHMUKTESHWAR AND IN THE KOLABA DISTRICT OF BOMBAY PROVINCE AND OPPRESSION AND HARASSMENT OF MUSALMANS AT OTHER PLACES IN UP, CP & MADRAS, BUT HAVE ALSO BEEN UNDERMINING THEIR ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF DAILY NECESSITIES OF LIFE, WHICH HAVE COME UNDER THE DIRECT CONTROL OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS. MUSSALMANS ARE DELIBERATELY INSULTED AND OPPRESSED IN THESE PROVINCES AND TREATED AS SUSPECTS. HERE IS WANTON INTERFERENCE IN THEIR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES ON ONE PRETEXT OR ANOTHER. A SYSTEMATIC ATTEMPT IS BEING MADE TO CRUSH THE SPIRIT OF MUSSALMANS BY SUBJECTING THEM TO INNUMERABLE HARDSHIPS AND SUFFERINGS. WORKING COMMITTEE CALL UPON THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED TO TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO PUT AN END TO LAWLESSNESS AND ORGANIZED ATTACKS ON THE MUSSALMANS AND DEVISE MEANS OF PROVIDING EFFECTIVE PROTECTION TO THEIR PERSON AND PROPERTY AND SAFEGUARDING THEIR LEGITIMATE, RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INTERESTS. THE WORKING COMMITTEE FURTHER URGE UPON THE GOVERNORS OF THE SAID PROVINCES TO SAFEGUARD THE INTERESTS OF THE MUSLIM MINORITIES, WHICH IS INCUMBENT UPON THEM BY VIRTUE OF THE POWERS VESTED IN THEM FOR DISCHARGING THEIR SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT 1935, UNDER WHICH THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENTS HAVE COME INTO POWER.

THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE ALL INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE EXPRESS THEIR DEEP SENSE OF PRIDE ON THE COURAGE, FORTITUDE AND ENDURANCE SHOWN BY THE MUSSALMANS IN THE PROVINCES IN WHICH THEY ARE IN A MINORITY IN NOT ONLY PATIENTLY AND CHEERFULLY SUFFERING LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY BUT THE INJUSTICE AND HARASSMENT BY THE MAJORITY IN MANY OTHER WAYS AFFECTING THEIR INTERESTS. THE WORKING COMMITTEE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE MUSSALMANS IN THESE PROVINCES WILL CONTINUE TO STAND FIRM AND UNITED IN RESISTING OPPRESSION AND INJUSTICE AT THE HANDS OF THE TYRANNICAL MAJORITY FOR THE FREEDOM OF MUSLIM INDIA. THE WORKING COMMITTEE FURTHER DEPLORES THE LOSS OF LIFE, INJURIES CAUSED TO PERSONS, AND DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY AND DEEPLY SYMPATHIZES WITH THE SUFFERERS. THE MUSLIM LEAGUE WILL DO ALL IN THEIR POWER TO HELP THEM IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE.—API.



9. Resolution Passed at the Working Committee Meeting of the All India Hindu Mahasabha in New Delhi.

Press Advice from the Associated Press of India, 10 February 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 33/7/47, NAI.

PRESS advice one

NEW DELHI

The working committee of the all India Hindu Mahasabha which concluded its deliberations here today passed a resolution resenting 'the attempt now being made by the Bengal Muslim league ministry to settle in Bengal Muslims from Bihar and other provinces with the definite political objectives of increasing the Muslim population strength in the Muslim minority districts of western Bengal. Already one lac and fifty thousand of such Muslims had already been settled in Bengal and that Pakistanization of western Bengal is being carried on with a definite plan and with the help of the state funds at the disposal of the Bengal ministry.'

The committee 'requests the government of INDIA to inquire into the situation to ascertain the amount of funds so far spent by Bengal ministry and take steps for preventing the utilization of public funds in furtherance of such communal objectives.'

Resolutions on communal situation in Bihar, Bombay and U.P. were also passed by the committee. Resolution on Bombay riots expresses the committee's regret at the 'inadequate measures adopted by the Bombay government to cope up with the acts of stabbings and acid throwings continued at Bombay and Ahmedabad for the last several months thereby indicating its inability to keep public peace and order at the respective centres of trade and commerce.'

The committee charged the U.P. Govt. with failure to check riots and said, 'the communal riots have been and are going on in the united provinces for the last eight or nine months, as a result of which Hindus inspite of their being in a majority have been the sufferers both in life and property. In the opinion of the committee the only reason of these riots continuing for such a long time is that, in that province Muslims though a minority of sixteen percent, hold a brutal monopoly of service in the police department as they hold seventy-six percent of the police services, besides the minister in charge of the police department is a Muslim, as a result of which the Muslims get various direct and indirect support and encouragement from the police.'

The committee called upon the U.P. Govt. 'to stop further recruitment of Muslims in the police services and the recently started home guards till such time as the number of Hindus attains the ratio according to their population in the province.'—API 10.2.47, 8 p.m.



10. Appeal for Action against Communal Propaganda

Letter from K. Subraya Pai to the President, Indian National Congress, 20 February 1947

AICC Papers, File No. G-17 (KW1)/1946, NMML.

Vitobha Temple Street,
Mangalore, S. India

Per Registered Post

To,
The President
Indian National Congress
AICC Office,
Allahabad.

Respected Sir,

Will you kindly give cognisance to the feelings of a Nationalist (Hindu) Indian, as expressed by me in the enclosed appeal to the Leaders of the 'RSS Sangh' and the Hindu Youth and Public in general?

The undersigned claims to have no Status in the Public Life nor has he any claims for Service or Sacrifice because of the humble position he is in up till now. But as he has burning desire to see the advent of a Socialist Indian Republic acceptable to all sections and shades of opinion in this Ancient Land, he is most sincerely extending sympathy and moral support to every move of the Congress and its Leadership.

The undersigned feels it his duty to bring to your notice, the slow but steady growth of the RSS activities and its manoeuvrings among the Hindu Youth and Public by instilling into their minds the necessity of Organization of the Hindus by which they contemplate the establishment of 'Hindu-Raj' of their dreams, which in all intents is based on the suppression of the minorities either by persuasion or by force. If this growth is allowed to be continued by the inactivity of the Congress and its Leaders, I am afraid the country will soon turn Fanatical, which will in the long run, threatening the very existence of the Congress Ideal of Unity among Hindus and non-Hindus and the establishment of a Democratic and Socialist Indian State. I hope the Congress, which underwent so many tribulations and privations, for the achievement of the genuine aspirations of Indians, will not sit idle at this juncture and leave the country to drift towards disunity, blood-shed and internecine warfare among the different sections of its people.

Anxiously watching for your and the Working Committee's proper lead to all the right thinking Indians and also expecting your vigorous counter-propaganda in this direction,

I remain,
Very sincerely yours,
K. Subraya Pai

AN APPEAL

BY A NATIONALIST HINDU

THE LEADERS, RANK AND FILE OF THE RASTRIYA SWAYAM SEVAK SANGH

AND ALSO TO THE INTELLIGENTIA OF THE HINDU YOUTH AND PUBLIC IN GENERAL

On this auspicious day of 'Shivaratri', the day of awakening to the religious reformer and founder of the 'Arya Samaj'—Swami Dayananda Saraswati and the fourth Death Anniversary of the Ideal Woman of India—Mrs Kasturba Gandhi. I am pained to address to you the following lines for your kind consideration.

1. It is deplorable to note that the 'RSS Sangh' and the Hindu Mahasabha while claiming to promote cultural, social and religious upliftment amongst the innumerable castes and sub-castes of the Hindu-fold, have in reality done no such service nor can they boast of any achievement in that direction. In the opinion of all Nationalist Hindu their approach has not been made on the proper lines for the following reasons, namely:
 - (a) They have not promoted freedom of worship in all caste-ridden Hindu Temples and even today a population of over 60 to 70 millions of the backward oppressed section of the Hindus are denied this privilege for no fault of theirs but merely on the consideration of their birth. Both these organizations have also not done any concrete work for the removal of the curse of untouchability still existing between the Upper classes and the so called Backward or Scheduled Castes of the Hindus.
 - (b) Neither the 'RSS Sangh' nor the 'Hindu Mahasabha' enjoy the confidence and support of the vast majority of the Hindus, because their very organizations being composed of Vested Interests and privileged and wealthy classes of the Hindus, they have no broad-based policy either for contact with the masses or for the upliftment of those less-fortunate, backward, illiterate masses of the Hindus. According to their preaching it is to be gathered that they believe in the establishment of a 'Hindu Raj' for the whole of India wherein they contemplate persecution and slavery not only for the non-Hindus but also for those Hindus who believe in the establishment of a Democratic and Socialist Indian State, promising equality of rights for all irrespective of caste or creed.
2. It must be well remembered that days of 'Imperialist Designs' have been a dream of the past and people everywhere, both in Asia and Africa have developed a sense of Mass Consciousness about the right of the masses to live a life of ease and comfort, so much so, you find unrest today not only in India, Burma, Indo-China, Indonesia (Dutch East Indies) and the Arab States of Egypt and Palestine, but in far off South and East Africa as well. You witness today as to who has won the 2nd World War. It is only Soviet Russia who has succeeded in outwitting the Imperialist Anglo Americans, who have been helpless all these 2 years, after the cessation of hostilities, in checking the spread of Communism in Finland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Austria, Hungary, Italy, France and Greater part of Germany. Coming to the East, there is growth of communism in Iran, China, India, Burma, Indonesia, Indo-China and others, where their growth has developed in varying degrees. In China, the Imperialist Kuomintang Government is fighting a bitter war with the Chinese Communists and it is to be seen as to who would come out successful.

Thus it is a foregone conclusion that the unnumbered, illiterate, starving and oppressed millions of India look to the advent of a Socialist or Workers-Raj rather than supporting organizations with 'Imperialist Designs' as they realize fully well that the latter offer no better treatment or status than the one already forced upon them by the British Imperialist Administration of India.

3. Therefore your approach should be made to the Masses of India, who are the backbone of this Indian Nation and who constitute the vast majority of Indians, struggling for food, drink and better living conditions. If you have failed to do so, as is evident from your activities since the past 2 or 3 decades, and if the same policy is pursued still further, you will lose every hold on the small percentage of the Ignorant Hindu Masses who have been promised happier and better life in the supposed 'Hindu Raj' that is yet to take its birth, if circumstances permit.

The late Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi have rightly said that the best way a man could please God is through service to the poor and oppressed humanity and it is further emphasized that God can reveal himself to the common man only in the shape of Bread. If your Organizations do not promise any of these aids, belated though they may be, to the vast majority of the Hindu Masses, what else on earth can satisfy them? Even the appearance of God before a starving or suffering man would not be pleasing to that wretched soul. Then how will you lure them with the promise of a 'Hindu Raj' in these days of hardship and suffering to the Hindu Masses of India.

If you Hindu brethren believe in the Prophecy of the Modern Sage Swami Vivekananda who won laurels for the religion of India (Hinduism) at the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in the year 1893, I shall quote the same for your serious consideration. Thus spoke he in one of his addresses to the Aristocratic class (Brahman), Kshatriyas an/or Vaishyas): 'You the upper classes of India, you are Mummies 10,000 years old. You vanish from the soil of India and let new India arise from the cottages of the peasant, the fisherman, the cobbler and the sweeper'. He had also prophesied that the end of the rule by 'Vaishyas' all over the world was already in sight (his utterance in the year 1897) and that it would be the turn of the 'Shoodras' or the working class to take up the reigns of government all over the world.

Thus, you will see that there is no scope for an Imperialist organization like the 'RSS Sangh' or the 'Muslim National Guards' to establish their cherished Kingdoms of 'Hindustan' and 'Pakistan' respectively...if either of the two organizations should succeed in establishing it, it will be for a very short duration, like the Germany of 1933-1945 with its ever growing war of Aggression, which finally collapsed and now lying under the heel of the Anglo-American-French-Russian Control Councils.

In this connection, may I quote the words of Mahatma Gandhi which appeared in his short but impressive letter addressed to Herr Hitler a few days before his Declaration of War against Poland. These are his words:

'What is won by the Sword, will be lost by the Sword'

and so it has happened for both the Western and Eastern Aggressors, Germany and Japan. Today, Fate seems to be very cruel to these 2 nations as their position today is more humiliating than that of the people of India.

I hope and pray to God almighty that no such calamity may befall on the people of India, whether they be Hindus or Mussalmans and that he may bring Reason and Forbearance to the

Fanatical Organizations of both the communities, resulting in the Dawn of a Free, Independent and Socialist Republic of India acceptable to all classes and shades of opinion inhabiting this Ancient Land, which can still take Pride in giving birth to almost all the saints and philosophers of the world from times immemorial, that is, from the time of the Vedas down to the Present Age.

Let New India of our Dreams succeed in guiding the other Nations of the World through Her Religion of Mutual toleration, Love and Unity in Diversity, thus opening a New Era in this world of Turmoil and Animosity against one another among the Human Beings!!!

This is my solemn Prayer to the God Almighty and I hope that you will also subscribe to it.

11. Moonje Exhorts Hindus to Retaliate against Muslim Aggression

Summary of Dr Moonje's Speech at Bombay, 9 March 1947

B.S. Moonje Papers, S. No. 110, NMML.

Mr Attlee, Prime Minister of England has made a statement which appears to me in compliance with the statements and requests made by mostly by the Congress leaders to the effect that if the British were to announce their determination to quit India and were to fix a date by which time they would quit India, then the third party, that is, the British being thus eliminated the Moslems would come to settlement with the Hindus and thus as anticipated by Mahatma Gandhi, a Hindu-Moslem Unity would be brought about.

Though we are thankful for such a statement we cannot be blind to the mischief implicit in it and the mischief lies in the fact that Mr Attlee statement provides for the transfer of the British power to a Government or Governments at the British Governments discretion instead of making a straight and frank statement that the power will be transferred to the Interim Central Government as provided and established according to the British Cabinet Mission's plan. This mischief has proved a direct incentive to Moslem hooliganism as is now rampant in Punjab and North-West Frontier Province. Whatever be the intentions of the British Government, fight has been forced on the Hindus in spite of their peaceful temperament. Therefore, it is a duty of the Hindus now to be prepared to fight the Mussulmans with all the weapons which are available and are in use against them by the Mussulmans. Without such a fight Hindus will not be able to win and protect their honour, religion and culture.

If the majority community of the Moslem in the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab have thought it wise to rise against the minority community, that is, the Hindus and the Sikhs, then should it not be the incumbent duty of the majority community of, say, UP, Bihar, CP, Bombay and Madras to retaliate so that they may check the aggression on the Hindus in the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province?

Forcible conversion seems to be the chief weapon of moral aggression of the Mussulmans as in Bengal. Should not the Hindus also pay them back in their own coin?

Now as regards the Congress resolution approving of the partition of Punjab, the question is who will actually execute the partition? Who will decide as to how the province is to be partitioned? If the Moslems were not to agree, and I am sure, they will never agree, have the Central Interim Government of the Congress power and courage to give effect to their proposal of partitioning the province? Some of the Muslim League leaders appear to be in favour of such a partition, but doubt is entertained of their honesty. And it has been openly said in the

press that it is a crafty move to divide the Sikhs from the Hindus. Thus if it is not a feasible proposition, what advantage has been gained by making committance beforehand? Will such a committal be not used against them to their detriment?

Thus taking all these facts together, the only conclusion that appears to be practicable is that the Hindus should prepare to give a grim fight to the Mussulmans because it is not now a communal problem, but a war between the Moslems and the Hindus. It is wrong to describe it as a Civil War because Mr Jinnah has taken care to reiterate that the Moslems have nothing in common with the Hindus and that everything Moslem is in conflict with everything Hindu.

12. 'Gandhiji Deeply Distressed'

The Hindustan Times, 10 March 1947.

Mahatma Gandhi contemplates to undertake a fast unto death if he does not find a change of heart among the Hindus in Bihar, it is learnt in New Delhi.

A positive hint to this effect is reported to have been given to the members of the Congress High Command.

Gandhiji, it is reported, continues to feel very much distressed over the recent happenings in Noakhali, Tipperah and Bihar.

'If India chooses to drift towards the path of violence and if Hindus and Muslims want to fight among themselves and cut each other's throats any time when India is on the threshold of freedom, then I don't want to be a party to live to see that chaotic India. I would pray to God to take me away from this world.'

This is Gandhiji's oft-repeated observation to many persons who contacted him during the last fortnight.

Another reply by Gandhiji to a query put to him on the eve of his departure for Bihar from Chandpur is considered very significant. Gandhiji, replying to a query whether he would be returning to Noakhali from Bihar, is reported to have said that if he was alive he would again come to Noakhali to finish his 'Do or Die' mission.

When a Press message regarding Gandhiji's contemplated fast was read out to him in his Patna Camp for confirmation, Gandhiji burst out into a laughter and said, 'Of course, there is a little bit of truth in it.'

Gandhiji further said that at present he had no intention of fasting, but circumstances might arise of which he had no knowledge, which might compel him to undertake a fast.—UPI

13. Report from Sind Province

Extract from Sind Fortnightly Report for First Half of March 1947, 19 March 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.

SECRET:

No. P-25-H (S)/47

GOVERNMENT OF SIND.

Home Department, (Special)

Sind Secretariat, Karachi, 19th March 1947

1. **Political.**—There is no doubt about it, the events in the Punjab are considered by Sind to be very near home. In Karachi itself, between the 7th and the 13th there was a distinct

atmosphere of panic. It all centred round the alleged intention of the Sikhs to hold an Anti-Pakistan Day. On the 10th it was clear that a very ugly intensification of rumour was getting hold. Both the Chief Secretary and the District Magistrate were approached by prominent citizens with stories of demonstrations to be staged or of a zero hour fixed for attack. No-one professed to believe these highly coloured stories; on the other hand, no-one was prepared to take the responsibility for discrediting these rumours. People preferred to take the easy way out and just 'pass it on'. This is of course exactly how rumour grows. So far Sind's luck has held again, and no serious incidents of communal nature have occurred. The incidents in Multan of course have a special interest for Sind, particularly Sukkur District, and it was at one time feared that refugees from Multan might spread panic in Sukkur District, particularly in the Rohri Sub-division. In the meantime there have been certain troop movements, which while not asked for by the Provincial Government, have been made after consultation with and consent of His Excellency the Governor. These movements may, therefore, be considered as purely precautionary. A great deal will depend on whether order can finally be restored in the Punjab. If trouble is avoided, it will not be for want of trying on the part of certain mischief-makers on both sides. There has been evidence of an organized whispering campaign.

Bihar refugees have not yet become a major problem. There are reported to be some five to six hundreds of these in Karachi; the number may have been increased. But it is necessary to discourage any belief that the Province can absorb an unlimited number of such refugees. While it is impossible to ignore the political complexion of this problem, it must be Government's first aim to obtain a clear appreciation of its economic aspects.

The question of various private armies has been considered by Government and it has been decided that at present no extra-ordinary measures are called for. But the District Magistrates have been informed that Government consider the present tendencies of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh and the Rashtriya Sewa Dal constitute a menace, and that a strict watch should be kept on the situation, with particular reference to the collection and storing of arms....

Chapter 7. Civil Disobedience Movements by the Muslim League

A. PUNJAB

1. Patel Criticizes League Leaders Involved in the Punjab Campaign

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Wavell, 26 January 1947

SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 4–5.

Dear Lord Wavell,

The comments of some of my colleagues of the Muslim League on the situation in the Punjab, caused by an open defiance, by some members of the League, of legal orders promulgated by lawful authority, have in my view transgressed the bounds of propriety and discretion, the observance of which was incumbent on them as Members of Government.

2. I do not think it is either fair or proper that Members of the Central Government should indulge in open criticism of any lawful action taken by the Provincial Government in the discharge of their responsibility. Provincial Governments have right to expect the co-operation of the Central Government in their difficult task of maintaining law and order. That, apart from withholding it, any of us should attribute motives or make comments which would encourage defiance to lawful orders or render their task more difficult is a negation of that accommodation between the Central and Provincial Governments, which is essential if we are to avoid an open conflict between the Centre and the provinces.

3. I feel that there is still time to prevent this dangerous tendency from becoming further accentuated and stop matters from passing from unfair criticism to open encouragement to defiance. I would, therefore, suggest for Your Excellency's consideration that the impropriety of the action of the Members concerned may be impressed upon them and they may be informed that consistently with their duties and obligations as Members of Government, they should refrain from any comments or criticism which would be likely to embarrass the Government of the Punjab in its present difficulties. Of course, if they wish to continue in their course, the only honourable course for them is to resign.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel



2. Punjab Governor's Assessment of League Leaders' Arrest

Extracts from a Letter from Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 26 January 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 558–60.

SECRET

NO. 642.

I have just drafted a reply to the Secretary of State's telegram of yesterday about the arrest of the Muslim League leaders in Lahore and connected matters. This reply will be repeated to Your Excellency, but I think I had better let you have a fuller account of what has happened....

After 7 p.m. the Home Secretary went to the Civil Lines Police Station to see the arrested leaders. He found them bitter and angry and determined to out Khizar at all costs. An aggressive crowd assembled outside this Police Station, and at one time it seemed that we were in for a difficult night. The Senior Superintendent of Police was, however, able to disperse this crowd by a severe *lathi* charge. He has a comparatively small Force at his immediate disposal, and gentler methods were impossible. I am informed that several members of this crowd were more or less seriously injured, and some of them have been admitted to hospitals; but no fatal casualties have been reported.

The night of 24–25th January from 11 p.m. was quiet.

7. The leaders arrested on 24th January were remanded to judicial custody and lodged in Jail early on the morning of 25th. The Muslim League leaders seemed uncertain about their next move. The Muslim League MLAs present in Lahore met at 11 a.m. at the Assembly Chamber (this was a Party meeting which had been arranged some time ago). Crowds collected outside the Chamber on two occasions, and had to be dispersed. There were also various processions and demonstrations, including one, headed by seven of the Muslim League MLAs, who compelled the police to arrest them. There were at least two demonstrations by women, and a few women were arrested.

In the early afternoon some of the Muslim League MLAs still at large called a 'mammoth meeting' at the Mochi Gate at 4 p.m. The Police dealt with this meeting, but ten more or less prominent persons including eight Muslim League MLAs had to be arrested. A Company of the Inniskillings was moved into the Kotwali during the afternoon.

Tear smoke was freely used on 25th. On both days the Police were handled with great skill and restraint, and I do not think that any demonstrator was at all seriously hurt, except some of those taking part in the demonstration outside the Civil Lines Police Station on 24th.

8. Khizar returned from Delhi after 5 p.m. on 25th, and I held a conference at Government House with him, Qizilbash, the Home Secretary, the Inspector-General of Police, and the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, CID, at 6 p.m. I reviewed the situation for Khizar, and pointed out to him that it had a law and order side and a political side. It was easier to send people to jail than to get them out of jail in a co-operative frame of mind; and I realized that whatever we might be able to do to see him through, he had to watch his political flanks and to consider how far he could go without making his own position impossible (I put these points to him objectively, as the Inspector-General of Police asked me to ascertain if I could, what Khizar's final position would be. There would be little object in bold decisions if he did not intend to stick to them.) Khizar took the situation quite calmly. He said he had never intended to make any arrests, and that nothing was further from his thoughts than to attack the Muslim League as a party. He had not supposed that the Muslim League would take him on on what he

thought a relatively unimportant issue and not a particularly good *casus belli* from the Muslim League point of view. The arrests had been forced on him, and he could not as Premier yield to threats. He was therefore determined to carry on as long as he could. He did not want to fill the jails, and action should, as far as possible, be confined to the organizers of the revolt against authority. We then decided to modify the notification under the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance specifying the uniform, emblems, and other things of the Muslim League National Guards so as to omit the reference to the flag—the description of the flag might, as it stands, be taken as banning the ordinary flag of Islam. We also drafted a press communiqué, and settled the outline of instructions to districts. District Officers are being told not to take any action as long as their districts remain quiet, but to act without hesitation against threatened or actual defiance of the law. In doing so they are to use the Ordinance or the ordinary law as may seem best, but the Ordinance may be preferable in most cases and will certainly have to be used for preventing [preventive] arrests.

9. So far no serious repercussions have been reported from districts other than Lahore, but the Muslim League MLAs not arrested have returned to their constituencies with instructions to organize defiance. Ghazanfar Ali, who was here when the trouble started and left yesterday evening for Sind, has made a nuisance of himself and intends to stimulate not only provincial, but all-India interest in Khizar's alleged frontal attack on the Muslim League. It would be a great help if Your Excellency could keep him and his Muslim League colleagues employed at Delhi until we see how things go.

10. Khizar is undoubtedly in a difficult position, both administratively and politically; but I am not convinced that the Muslim League are as strong as they believe. They have various difficulties of their own, and an organized revolt against authority is easier to start than to maintain. We can only wait and see what happens during the next few days. Khizar's best hope is probably to win a victory on the law and order side and then to be very conciliatory, but he is undoubtedly in for a most unpleasant time.

11. I wish to make it quite clear to Your Excellency and to the Secretary of State that I take full responsibility for what has happened. The suggestion for action came from me, and although I put no pressure on Khizar, he consulted me at all stages, and I approved his decision. For your own information, I have reason to think that Khizar did not consult his colleagues in the Cabinet other than Qizilbash. He is apt to keep law and order matters very much to himself and the Governor....

3. 'National Guards Are an Integral Part of the League—Liaquat Ali Khan'

27 January 1947

Report from *Dawn* as cited in *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 209–10.

'It is a complete travesty of truth to describe the [Muslim] League National Guards as a private army, and this is only an excuse for the indefensible conduct of the Ministry which is clearly out to suppress the Muslim League in the Punjab,' says Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, General Secretary, All India Muslim League in a statement from New Delhi on Saturday [25 January].

'I have now seen fuller reports of the Punjab Government's action against the Muslim League National Guards in the province and that Government's communiqué purporting to explain the action.

‘The Muslim League has no private army,’ continues Mr Liaquat Ali Khan. ‘The National Guard are an integral part of the Muslim League Organization and an attack on it is an attack on the Muslim League as such. The Punjab Government’s apologia that their action is not directed against the League will deceive no one.

‘Since the National Guards came into existence in 1938 they have not once been guilty of violence or lawlessness. Their activities have been confined to inculcating discipline among Muslims, maintaining order at public meetings and processions, and carrying out relief work in times of distress. During the war, the National Guards played an important part in assisting the Civil authority in affording relief to the evacuees from Burma. During the Bengal Famine they carried out extensive relief operations; and during the recent Bihar massacres they did exemplary humanitarian work.

‘The fact is that the present Punjab Ministry, which is essentially Hindu in character and which continues in office with the support of a handful of Muslim quislings, is an unnatural form of Government for the Punjab where Muslims form a majority in the population.

‘The recent by-election in Dera Ghazi Khan, in which the Muslim League won a remarkable victory in spite of every [*sic*] conceivable odds and obstacles put by the authorities in the way of the League candidate, has once again demonstrated Muslim Punjab’s lack of confidence in the present Ministry which is now making a desperate bid to overawe and suppress the Muslim League by these repressive measures.

‘Its present action in outlawing the National Guards and arresting respected and responsible leaders of the Punjab Muslims marks the culmination of a long chain of oppression and persecution of Muslim Leaguers throughout the province since the Ministry came into office.

‘The Punjab Ministry has thrown a challenge to the Muslim League Organization not only in the Punjab but throughout India, and it alone must bear the responsibility for the consequences of its insane action.’

4. ‘Rashtriya Sangh Cherishes No Ill-will towards Anyone: It Is Neither a Communal Body Nor a “Private” Army’

Extracts from a Report in *The Tribune*, 27 January 1947.

LAHORE, 23 Jan.—A statement, having the full approval of the former Prant Sang-Chalak of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh, Punjab, Rai Bahadur Badri Das, refuting the charge against the organization being a ‘Private Army’ indulging in any communal activities, has been issued today by the former Provincial Secretary of the Sangh, Mr Dharamvir....

Rai Bahadur Badri Das says:

Mr Dharamvir has shown me the statement he has issued to the press in connection with the recent orders of the Punjab Government declaring the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh to be an unlawful body. The members and the sympathizers of the Sangh will certainly obey the orders and I have no doubt will not defy it in any manner whatsoever.

I have known of all the activities of the Sangh and have no hesitation in endorsing Mr Dharamvir’s statement to the effect that the Sangh has none of the activities attributed to it by the Government communiqué, nor has the Sangh, as I know it, ever cherished any ill-will towards anyone.

I hope the Government will be pleased to reconsider their decision regarding the RS Sangh.

Mr Dharam Vir's Statement

The following is the statement issued by Mr Dharam Vir, former Provincial Secretary of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh:

The order of the Punjab Government banning the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh comes as a surprise to us and the sympathizers of the movement. The Sangh is purely a cultural, social and moral association for disseminating feelings of brotherhood and amity amongst the Hindus. There is nothing militant in its aims and its programmes and methods of work have no military character. It has not even a semblance of a body which can be called a militia, a private army or anything approaching these. It pursues a harmless programme of physical exercises as a means of bringing the boys and youths together. It has scrupulously avoided political colouring and has never indulged in anti-Government activity of any kind. Nor has it ever taken part in any communal movement. It is non-communal in the sense that it does not entertain any hostile feelings against any community in the country. Its principal aim is purely educative. It has only been exercising the right which every community possesses to better its condition and follow its cultural traditions....It is an all-India body and no Provincial Government has during this last 22 years found it harmful to the public peace....

Mischievous Propaganda

As a matter of fact a great deal of mischievous and provocative propaganda has been carried on by some newspapers against the Sangh. The Sangh refrained from taking notice of the mischievous writings in conformity with its avowed policy of avoiding controversy leading to friction. It was hoped that the writers in the Muslim press would sooner or later discover their mistake.

But the authorities appeared to persist in their belief based entirely on false and imaginary reports and statements....

Cancel the Order

It is hoped that the authorities will take these facts into consideration and cancel the order banning the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh.

I appeal to the public not to be excited or be swept away by emotions and all of us must remain disciplined and peaceful and give one more proof of our determination to abide by the law, inspite of the fact that it is based on misunderstanding and injustice.

5. 'League Leaders' Arrests in Punjab: Jinnah Shocked'

Extracts from a Report in *The Tribune*, 27 January 1947.

KARACHI, 26 Jan.—Mr M.A. Jinnah, President of the All India Muslim League, has issued the following statement to the press:

'I am shocked to read the report in the press of the decision of the Punjab Government to declare the Muslim National Guards organization unlawful under the guise of and plea that the Government cannot allow private armies. There is not an iota of truth in it that the Muslim National Guards are based on the idea of racing up a private army and this has been fully explained by Mr Liaquat Ali Khan in his statement issued yesterday. No complaint was made, or warning given, by the Punjab Government to the executive of the National Guards, the Provincial Muslim League or the All India Muslim League, nor has the Muslim National

Guards organization been shown to have done anything or attempting to do anything that was unlawful....

‘It is not clear whether this policy and action taken by the Punjab Government is by the ministry, or the Governor, or both. The Premier of the Punjab, who was in Delhi discussing with the Viceroy the question of a military academy for Punjab, when asked what he had to say about this action on the part of the Punjab Government to my astonishment, said that he had nothing to say until he returned to Lahore. Evidently, the decision was taken in his absence and without his knowledge and I hope the Premier will explain his position without any further delay with regard to this matter.

‘The repercussions of this one more mad and inimical action against the Muslim League on the part of the Punjab Government will be terrific all over Muslim India and I appeal to the Viceroy to immediately intervene and save the situation which otherwise may take a very serious turn for which the entire responsibility will rest with the Viceroy and HMG.

‘The Working Committee of the All India Muslim League, which is meeting in Karachi on the 29th of January, will consider the whole matter and decide upon what course of action should be adopted to meet this uncalled for aggression and unwarranted policy of the Punjab Government at this most critical time when already there is so much trouble and unrest all over India.’—API.

6. ‘League Leaders Released: Punjab Govt’s Decision’

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 27 January 1947.

LAHORE, 26 Jan.—The Punjab Government decided tonight to withdraw cases against and passed orders for the release of the first batch of eight Muslim League leaders, including Mr Iftikhar Hussain Khan of Mamdot, Mr Firoze Khan Noon, Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan, Mian Mumtaz Daultana, Begum Shah Nawaz, Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din and Begum Kamal-ud-Din, who were arrested on Friday last, it was officially announced to-night.

Premier’s Statement

...The Punjab Premier, Malik Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana, has issued the following statement:

I was away from Lahore on 24th January when the offices of the RSSS and the Muslim League National Guards were searched and demonstrations by the Muslim League began in Lahore city. Since my return on 25th January, I have studied the situation and wish to make the position of the Punjab Government clear.

During the last year the communal situation in the Punjab has given cause for grave anxiety. The decision to declare the RSSS and the MLNG unlawful associations was taken solely in the interests of communal peace, and the Punjab Government assumed that their action would have the support or acquiescence of all law-abiding citizens.

I find, however, that the declaration in respect of the MLNG has been interpreted by the Muslim League as an attack upon them as a political party. Nothing was farther from the thoughts of my Government than any such attack and I wish to do everything I can to remove any misunderstanding....



7. 'Procession of One Lakh Muslims Marches through Lahore Streets'

Extracts from a Report in *Dawn*, 28 January 1947.

LAHORE, Monday.—The Muslim League civil disobedience campaign took a new turn today when the seven League leaders who were released from the Central Jail yesterday again defied the ban and addressed a gathering of one lakh Muslims outside the Mochi Gate to show their determination to fight the present unrepresentative quisling Ministry with all their resources.

Later the crowd was led by the League leaders including Khan of Mamdot and Malik Feroz Khan Noon in a mile-long procession which passed through the Circular Road and dispersed peacefully outside the Yakki Gate.

The police did not interfere, nor did they disperse the meeting or arrest the leaders.

According to an information received in the Punjab Muslim League office, more than one thousand persons were arrested on Monday all over the Punjab for defying the ban.

The League leaders have planned to take out another procession tomorrow which will start from Delhi Gate and terminate at Punjab Civil Secretariat.

As the time for the meeting approached, a huge crowd gathered and wave after wave of Muslim volunteers and Muslim League National Guards poured into Mochi Gate Square carrying banners and flags and shouting slogans....

MOCHI GATE MEETING

Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, MLA, addressing the meeting said: 'We shall carry on our struggle all over the Punjab until all restrictions on civil liberties of the people are withdrawn by the Government. We have come here to tell you that if you further carry on your fight with the same determination and patience we shall not only achieve victory in the Punjab but we shall bring the realization of our goal of Pakistan much nearer.'

Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din warned that mischief-mongers would try their best to turn their movement into an inter-communal strife and thereby direct the energies of the Muslims into wrong channels. 'It was our duty now to guard scrupulously against this move.'

Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan, Deputy Leader of the Muslim League Assembly Party, in the course of his speech said: 'I have come to you today not to damp your strong sentiments but to demand the maximum of sacrifice from you. During the last three days you have put up a very courageous fight against the forces which are out to crush the Punjab Muslims.'

'I assure you that if you carry on your struggle with a grim determination you will shortly succeed in uprooting the quisling Ministry in the Punjab, and restoring civil liberties in the Punjab,' he added.

Mian Mumtaz Daultana, member of the All-India Muslim League Committee of Action said that they were thrown out of jail and they wanted to go back at the earliest opportunity. 'We shall fight till the people of the Punjab had fully regained their civil liberties.'

He appealed to the people to keep it as a purely political movement and should not be drifted into an inter-communal conflict....

Khan Iftikhar Hussain Khan of Mamdot presided.

Two hundred butchers of Lahore took out a procession today in Mazang, a suburb of Lahore in defiance of the prohibitory order. The police accompanied the procession but did not take any action.

The processionists dispersed after crossing the half a mile long bazar of Mazang.—APA and API.

8. 'Punjab League Leaders Re-arrested: Ban on Muslim League National Guards Lifted'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 29 January 1947.

LAHORE, Tuesday.—THE POLICE ARRESTED AT MID-NIGHT ALL TOP-RANKING LEADERS. ARRESTED LEADERS INCLUDE KHAN OF MAMDOT, MALIK FERAZ KHAN NOON, MR MUMTAZ DAULTANA, MIAN IFTIKHARUDDIN, SARDAR SHAUKAT HYAT KHAN, BEGAM SHAH NAWAZ, MR GHULAMUDDIN KASURI, PROFESSOR ABDUL WAHEED, MIAN NOORULLAH AND MIAN AMIRUDDIN.

THEY HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO THE CHARING CROSS POLICE STATION. MR JINNAH HAS BEEN INFORMED.

An earlier message from the same correspondent said: The Punjab League won the first round of its battle against the Congress-Khizr Fascist regime when the Punjab Premier made a statement to the Press this afternoon withdrawing the ban on the Muslim League National Guards.

Following the lifting of the ban the Punjab League announced that the struggle will be continued till the ban on processions and public meetings is lifted. In pursuance of that decision Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan, Begum Shah Nawaz, Begum Noon, Miss Zahida Hyat and Mian Amiruddin courted arrest. But they were taken out of Lahore and then let off at different places.

The Punjab Muslim Press has decided to suspend publication for 15 days from Thursday next. This decision was taken by Nawa-i-Waqt, Zamindar, Ehsan and Eastern Times following an order by the Punjab Government directing the papers not to publish anything concerned with or bearing on the agitation against the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance....

9. 'Punjab Govt Removes Ban'

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 29 January 1947.

LAHORE, 28 Jan.—The order declaring the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh and the Muslim National Guards to be unlawful associations under the Criminal Law Amendment Act was withdrawn by the Punjab Government today....

In the course of his statement the Premier says—

'In my statement of 26th January I endeavoured, on behalf of my colleagues and myself, to make it clear that in declaring the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh and Muslim League National Guards unlawful associations the Punjab Government was not attacking any political party. The declarations were part of the Punjab Government's policy for the maintenance of communal peace. There has been considerable uneasiness both among Muslims and non-Muslims over the alleged collection of arms by private volunteer bodies, and I expected that the declarations would be accepted in the same spirit as other emergency measures which have been necessary during the past difficult months, and have undoubtedly saved the Punjab from communal disorder.

'Unfortunately an impression persists that the Punjab Government did intend to attack the Muslim League as a party. The Punjab Government is determined to remove this impression in the interests of communal peace, and has accordingly decided to withdraw the declarations against the RSSS and MLNG. The Punjab Government is prepared to take the risk involved in order to set all doubts finally at rest.

‘But in the present state of communal feeling, no government can agree to the general withdrawal of emergency restrictions particularly those on processions and meetings and the Punjab Government intends to maintain and enforce such restrictions as it considers essential. Persons who break the law will be adequately dealt with.

‘I appeal to the members of all communities to support the Punjab Government in maintaining order and communal peace....’

10. ‘Ashraf’s Tribute to Punjab Women’

Dawn, 29 January 1947.

DR M. ASHRAF, Communist leader, in an interview with me, said that the Punjab Governments action against the Muslim National Guards was a conspiracy of the bureaucracy to further sharpen the Congress–League differences.

He said: ‘But I must congratulate the elements who saw the danger of the inter-communal strife and raised the question of the civil liberties.’

Dr Ashraf said that the ban on the RSS was only formal and the Punjab Government made no serious efforts to search the Sangh headquarters.

Referring to the seizure of the steel helmets and the bogey that the National Guards was a private army, he said: ‘It is mean and malicious propaganda. Possession of the steel helmets, which were bought from the Government of India’s Disposals Directorate, cannot make an organization an army. Steel helmets are not armoured cars.’

Dr Ashraf said that it was significant that the decision to ban the National Guards was taken at the meeting called by the Governor where neither the Ministers nor the Chief Secretary, Mr Akhtar Hussain was invited.

He paid glowing tributes to the ‘undying heroism and courage of the Muslim women who faced tear-gas and other dangers with a stout heart.’

11. Governor’s Report on the League Agitation

Extract from a Letter from Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 29 January 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. III, pp. 331–7.

Secret
No. 643

Government House, Lahore

Dear Lord Wavell,

Since I wrote to Your Excellency on 26th January about the Muslim League agitation, I have sent you several rather scrappy telegrams. I had now better continue the story in a second letter.

2. There were demonstrations of the usual kind in Lahore and elsewhere on 26th January. At a conference in the afternoon the Premier began to outline the policy which he and his colleagues later approved. He said he thought that the Muslim League meant to take him on if not on the question of the Muslim League National Guards, then on some other question. A deliberate attempt to overthrow his Government by unconstitutional means would be a matter of law and order and constitutional principle, and would have to be handled with the firmness shown against the Congress agitation in 1942. He certainly did not want a head-on conflict with the League and must give the leaders every opportunity of reconsidering their position.

He decided to issue a conciliatory statement... He discussed at some length the advantages and disadvantages of withdrawing the prosecutions against the eight leaders, and said he was definitely of opinion that withdrawal, though it might do little good, would gain some credit for Government among moderate Muslims and among members of the services.

3. The eight leaders were released on the night of 26–27th January. The two women, Begum Shah Nawaz and Begum Kamal-ud-Din, left jail with every appearance of pleasure, but the men made a fuss and left under protest. I understand that they reached their homes at about midnight.

4. On 27th January there was a further conference on the situation at 10 a.m. It was reported that the released leaders were meeting at the Muslim League office and intended to hold a big meeting at the Mochi Gate of Lahore city in the afternoon. There were reports of disturbances from several other districts. I suggested that there might be advantage in a direct contact with Mamdot. As the Premier and his colleagues are not on speaking terms with the Muslim League leaders, it was agreed that I should send for Mamdot and have a frank talk with him. The Premier said that I might inform Mamdot that the Punjab Government would consider withdrawing simultaneously the ban on the Muslim League National Guards and the ban on the Sangh. He could not agree to the withdrawal of the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance, 1946. (Incidentally this is an Ordinance made by me under Section 89 of the Government of India Act, 1935, and not an Ordinance made on advice from the Ministers.) I was not to commit myself with Mamdot, but to discuss his attitude with the Premier after I had seen him. I saw Mamdot at about 12.15 p.m., and append a copy of a note I recorded immediately after the interview. Mamdot was quite amiable, but it was clear that he and his colleagues in the Muslim League were extending their demands a good deal beyond the removal of the ban on the Muslim League National Guards.

5. My interview with Mamdot had no appreciable effect. In order that he might get the fullest possible advantage from the release of the leaders, the Premier agreed to allow the meeting at the Mochi Gate announced for the afternoon....

7. The Premier's statement announcing the withdrawal of the bans was issued at about 1.15 p.m. News of it reached the Muslim League leaders early in the afternoon, but they carried on with their plans and announced at their meeting that the removal of the ban on the Muslim League National Guards was neither here nor there. The ban was not a particularly important matter and what they were really after was to get rid of restrictions under the Ordinance and to overthrow the coalition Ministry. I have not seen full reports of the speeches or of a statement issued during the afternoon by the Muslim League leaders, but there is no doubt about their general tenor. The afternoon was disturbed and a good many leaders and others were arrested and dumped at some little distance from Lahore....

10. The Premier seems confident that the situation can be controlled. He says that having got the question of the ban on the Muslim League National Guards out of the way it is a straight fight on the law and order and constitutional issues. The Muslim League contend that they were done out of office after the General Election, that they cannot stand the present Ministry, and that it must be ousted by a show of force. They do not seem to have considered where these contentions land them. Past civil disobedience movements have usually been against irremovable Executives and could be represented as the only means open to their organizers of ventilating, and obtaining redress for, genuine grievances; but the present movement is against a Ministry constituted under the Government of India Act, 1935, and strikes at the roots of

democratic Government. In fact if the Muslim League succeeded, they would make their own position impossible, for they would have created a precedent very easy for the non-Muslims of the Punjab to follow, and the non-Muslims are cleverer at this sort of agitation than the Muslims. I can hardly think that our Muslim League leaders consulted their High Command before manoeuvring themselves into such an unsatisfactory position.

11. There is definite evidence that educated people, including some members of the Muslim League, think the agitation ill-timed and silly. The restrictions under the Ordinance are admittedly severe; their justification is that they have undoubtedly saved the Punjab from communal disorder during a very difficult time. Moreover, all communities, and particularly the Muslims, have taken full advantage of the exemption granted to religious meetings, and the Muslims have probably done as much political speaking during the past few months as is good for them. Some of the soreness to which the agitation is due arises from the imposition, under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, of a local ban on meetings and processions in the Dera Ghazi Khan district during a recent bye-election. As Your Excellency knows, I thought this ban unnecessary, but was unable to bring the Premier round to my view.

12. The Premier is now committed to a considerable repressive operation. I cannot say yet how things will go, but he has a reasonable chance of holding his own. At the early stages he did everything possible to conciliate his opponents, and he decided to take them on only when it was clear there was no practicable alternative.

13. I am sending copies of this letter to Wylie, Caroe and Mudie, and I am also enclosing a spare copy in case Your Excellency wishes to send one to the Secretary of State.

Yours sincerely,
E.M. JENKINS

ENCLOSURE

NOTE BY JENKINS

27th January, 1947

I saw the Nawab of Mamdot this morning. I said that I had sent for him because I did not wish the Punjab to drift into a very dangerous situation owing to misunderstandings and lack of personal contact. I could assure him that the declaration of the RSS and the MLNG as unlawful associations was not aimed at the Muslim League. The decision to make the declaration was taken by Government; I was myself a party to it and entirely approved it....

3. In conclusion I told the Nawab once more that nobody wanted a violent struggle in the Punjab and that the only thought in the minds of those responsible for law and order was to keep the peace and to steer the Punjab through this very difficult period; but I must repeat that no Government could tolerate a deliberate and unconstitutional attack on its authority. Such an attack would not be a party issue, but an issue of constitutional principle. I asked him to believe that there was no desire to suppress the Muslim League or to hold its members in custody. But if the leaders stimulated defiance, Government would have to act quickly and firmly. The Nawab said he quite understood my position. Our interview then ended.

E.M.J.



12. 'Punjab Action Committee's Call'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 30 January 1947.

LAHORE, [28 Jan]: The following statement has been issued to the press by the Committee of Action of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League including the leaders who were arrested on 24th January.

On account of the recent sudden development precipitated by the Punjab Government's order banning the Muslim National Guards, there is liable to be some confusion in the minds of the public about the real motives which have compelled the Punjab Provincial Muslim League to embark on a general Civil Disobedience Movement throughout the province... Therefore, we find it necessary to acquaint our people with the background and the occasion of our decision.

As the public is very well aware, the past general elections in the Punjab were held under circumstances of indescribable oppression, when the entire coercive machinery of the Government was prostituted and perverted to harass, victimise and suppress the Muslim League. Methods of violence and illegal interference were employed which have no parallel outside the darkest chapters of the Fascist gangsterism.

After the elections when all the satanic resources of the Glancy-Khizar axis had failed to stem the triumphant progress of the aroused Muslim people, the Governor of the province imposed upon the Punjab, a Government headed by a handful of professional disrupters and discredited traitors, who at the hands of the people had suffered a defeat hardly equalled in political history.

This Government, composed almost exclusively of non-Muslims and headed by half a dozen Muslim traitors who had been expressly repudiated by the electorate, was forced by the most undemocratic methods and through the vilest intrigue on a province which was predominantly Muslim, and which was regarded by the Muslims throughout India as the cornerstone of their future freedom and Pakistan.

Immediately after the formation of the Government, the first action of this clique of traitors was to impose Section 144 in almost all the towns of the province, thus choking all political life and making the normal functioning of every bonafide political party impossible. This was naturally no loss to the Unionist ramp which had never had the slightest relationship with the people and which having secured a handful of seats in the last elections through the obliging pencil of the polling officers, wished for ... so much as to be protected from ... public expression, opinion ... the Congress ... of the present unpopular Government by launching a general non-co-operation movement at an early date, and the order banning the Muslim National Guards was only an occasion which precipitated an action already ripe for execution.

Therefore, there is no truth whatever in the suggestion made in certain usually misinformed quarters that the present step of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League was taken in haste. On the other hand, if anything, we owe an apology to the expectant masses of the Punjab for the delay in giving the orders for the fight and thus forcing them to submit to this brutal suppression of their liberties for so long....

ALL-OUT STRUGGLE

In view of the above circumstances, it is our decision that we shall continue our present all-out non-violent mass struggle against the reactionary Punjab regime until the normal functioning of all legitimate and peaceful popular organizations and parties is secured.

We need not emphasize that our struggle will remain non-violent and non-communal, and no better proof of this can be given than the gallant and heroic manner in which the Muslim masses have behaved during the last three or four days, despite ruthless police repression and provocation from many quarters.

We warn our people that the key to our success lies in continuing to resist all provocation towards communal outbreaks, despite the efforts of *agents provocateurs* and by proving to the world the manifest political and democratic nature of our struggle.

As the majority community in this province and as the architects of Pakistan it falls upon us to prove to our minorities the reality of the security and mutual harmony we promise them in Pakistan, and to invite them today to join us in a struggle which is a common democratic fight against a common oppression.

Lastly we congratulate the Muslims of the Punjab on the wonderful spirit they have displayed and salute them in the name of Islam, to the high traditions of which they have gloriously and nobly lived up.

Our message to them is: 'Stand firm, and go forward in the front rank of this non-violent struggle, offering yourself for arrest in the largest possible numbers for the vindication of our honour and our freedom and for the achievement of our Pakistan.'

13. 'Punjab Campaign Spreads Far and Wide'

Dawn, 2 February 1947.

LAHORE, [1 Feb.]: In spite of the Goebbelsian lies by the Punjab Ministry in misrepresenting the intent and scope of Punjab people's non-communal and non-violent struggle for civil liberties and in spite of prefabricated 'Communiqués' designed to mislead world public opinion regarding its progress, the League Civil Disobedience Campaign, on its 9th day, has spread far and wide in the Punjab.

In Gujerat two Muslim League MLAs, Mr Jahan Khan Bhusal and Nawabzada Asghar Ali Khan, courted arrest with 60 League National Guards riding on horse back. The horses were also placed under arrest. The processionists numbering several thousands peacefully dispersed. Nawabzada Asghar Ali Khan is the son of late Nawab Sir Fazal Ali who was regarded as one of the pillars of the British rule in India. The remaining three MLAs of Gujerat have already been arrested.

Thousands of villagers are trekking their way to Gujerat to court arrest. Today's biggest news is the arrest of the Leghari, Chief of Dera Ghazi Khan, which place is described by the Government to be 'quiet'. Nawab Mohd Khan Leghari, President of Dera Ghazi Khan Muslim League, son of Nawab Hafiz Mohammad Khan Leghari, Chaudhri Mazhar Ahmed Tumandar, Mr Ata Mohammad Khan Bolzar, MLA, Sardar Bahadur Khan Treshek, MLA, Fayaz Mohammad Zaildar and Akhwand Abdul Karim, MLA, were arrested after they led a huge procession through the city of Dera Ghazi Khan.

Nawab Sir Jamal Khan Leghari, who will court arrest in Lahore on Monday, is the biggest landlord of the Punjab.

The first martyr of the Punjab who fell to police lathi blows belongs to Simla. He died as the result of a lathi charge by the police. Simla observed complete hartal.

All leaders and League workers of the Lahore District Muslim League were arrested at Kasur on Friday. Among them is Sardar Mohammad Husain, MLA.

Reports from Jullundur show that all League prisoners have gone on hunger-strike as protest against ill-treatment by the authorities. The situation in Jullundur is extremely tense. The people refuse to call off the hartal.

11 persons of Nankana Sahib who have been sentenced to 2 1/2 years' rigorous imprisonment each under the Public Safety Ordinance passed through Lahore on their way to Rawalpindi Jail. They were hand-cuffed and fettered.

The Muslim League flag with crescent and star flew over the gates of the Government House this afternoon, the heroine of the drama was Zahida Hayat, daughter of the late Sir Sikander Hyat Khan. Along with Begum Mumtaz Daultana, she led a thousand-strong procession of Muslim women who carried children on their arms and marched towards Government House.

Amidst vociferous shouts of 'Down with Khizr Ministry', Zahida Hayat planted the League flag on Government House gate. It fluttered there for a while and was eventually removed by a police constable.

On the way the women's procession passed the house of Minister Qizilbash and demonstrated for some time. The doors of the Qizilbash household were bolted and barred.

The main meeting outside Mochi Gate was again attended today by a crowd of about one lakh of persons and was addressed by Choudhry Abdul Kabir, Secretary, Lahore City Muslim League. He advised people to carry on the struggle peacefully and non-communally till the victory was won.

The audience converted itself into a huge procession, passed through Delhi Gate and Dabbi Bazaar and then as it progressed towards The Mall and reached Queen's Statue. Volleys of tear-gas bombs were fired at it.

Sixty persons were arrested earlier in the day. Sixty students were also arrested, among them being Mr Bashir Ahmed, President of the Pakistan Ambulance Corps, 7 Khaksars also courted arrest.

In Multan Syed Ali Husain Gardezi, Syed Vilayet Hussain Gardezi, Mr Abdur Razaq, Bar-at-Law, and Mian Abdullah, one of the biggest landlords of the Northern Punjab, Syed Nabi Shah Gilani, MLA and Nawabzada Mohd Islam led a procession estimated to be one lakh strong.

Malik Shaukat Ali, Advocate, member of the Lahore Corporation, has been nominated Acting Vice-President by Mr Khalil Ahmed, the Acting President of the Provincial League.

14. 'Punjab Ministry's Fascist Methods'

Dawn, 2 February 1947.

...The following is the full text of the resolution on the Punjab situation adopted by the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League released to the Press:

'The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League have noted with grave concern the serious situation developing in the Punjab where thousands of Muslims, men and women, are courting arrest every day all over the province as a protest against the suppression of their political rights and civil liberties and against continued provocations offered to them by the Provincial Ministry.

'One of these provocations, which deeply stirred the feelings of Muslims in the Punjab and outside, was the order promulgated by the Punjab Government on 24 January and since withdrawn declaring the Muslim National Guards an unlawful association.

'The Committee strongly condemns this order which amounted to a biggest and most high-handed attempt to suppress the activities of the Muslim League in the Punjab.

'The National Guards is a body of volunteers organized by the Muslim League to assist in peaceful and legitimate political and social work. The National Guards functions under the Muslim League's discipline and control and forms part of the Muslim League organization.

'The Working Committee congratulates the Punjab Muslim League organization on having successfully resisted this insulting order and secured its withdrawal.

'The Committee, however, cannot overlook the fact that the mere withdrawal of this order makes no improvement in the general conditions prevailing in the Punjab and involving, on the one hand, persistent and widespread persecution of the Muslims for political reasons by the Ministry and, on the other hand, almost total denial to them of those constitutional methods of self-expression and criticism of the Government by the Opposition, which are the essential bases of democracy.

'The present Ministry which is a fundamentally unrepresentative and unpopular one and which is a creation of combination of groups hostile to the Muslim League which is the largest Party and the Muslims in the Punjab generally, in its fear of free public opinion and democratic principles and in order to maintain itself in office in defiance of the wishes and rights of the politically awakened majority in the Punjab has been resorting with growing recklessness to the Fascist methods of gagging public opinion, suppressing normal civil and constitutional liberties of the people and persecuting its political opponents.

'For a long time now the Provincial Legislature has practically ceased to function except for the purpose of hurried voting on budget once in a year, the Opposition being given absolutely no opportunity of bringing forward non-official proposals in the House.

'A ban on public meetings under Section 144 of the CrPC practically throughout the province has long been a normal feature of the administration.

'A so-called Public Safety Ordinance, which reduces civil liberties and the liberty of the Press to a farce, has been promulgated on a false pretext.

'The act that the powers vested in the Government and its officials, under this Ordinance, are actually being used to put down an agitation for the restoration of civil liberties in the province has thoroughly exposed the falsehood of the pretext for promulgating it.

'It is significant that the Muslims are the principal sufferers from all these bans and restrictions on fundamental civil rights and normal political activity, because the other communities can influence the administration through their chosen representatives in the Ministry.

'At the same time the Ministry has been carrying on a widespread campaign of persecution, coercion and intimidation against workers and supporters of the Muslim League with the object of disrupting and breaking up the political solidarity of Muslims.

'Its war upon the united political front of Muslims in the Punjab has imposed untold suffering on numerous Muslims, particularly in the rural areas of the province. Thousands have been and are being even refused any ration of controlled commodities, like sugar and kerosene oil, and otherwise persecuted because they are members or supporters of the Muslim League. Muslim public servants from gazetted officers down to clerks and petty village officials, who refuse to act as the tools of the ministers in their political war upon the Muslim League, are being harassed, humiliated and removed from positions of responsibility.

'Keeping in view the situation thus created in the Punjab, the committee have no doubt that the responsibility for the present serious developments in the Punjab rests solely on those

who have practically blocked every channel of constitutional political activity for Muslims and made it impossible for them to exercise their ordinary civil rights or to hold and express freely their political opinions, thereby reducing democracy in the Punjab to mockery.

‘The Working Committee express their whole-hearted sympathy for Muslims of the Punjab in their sufferings and trials. It is the Committees considered opinion and earnest advise to Muslims that they should maintain a perfectly non-violent, disciplined, firm and dignified attitude in their protest against repression and coercion and the suppression of democratic freedom in their province.

‘The Working Committee wish to make it absolutely clear that the objectives of the Punjab Muslim Leagues present movement are confined to securing the restoration of normal civil liberties in that province and involve no inter-communal issue at all.

‘The committee warn Muslims as well as Non-Muslims to be on their guard against attempts which may be made out of mischievous motives or because of misapprehensions, to give the present situation in the Punjab a colour of inter-communal strife or to import irrelevant communal controversies into it and feel confident that no community will lend itself to be dragged into this conflict by the machinations of those who want to discredit the Muslim League.

‘The Working Committee most earnestly urge and call upon the Punjab Government to forthwith withdraw all restrictive measures on political activities and not to misuse the special powers conferred by the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance, 1946 and release all those who have been imprisoned arrested or detained in this connection.’—API

15. Governor Rejects Alleged Abuse of Punjab Public Safety Ordinance

Extract from a Letter from Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 3 February 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 609–10.

SECRET
NO. 647.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, LAHORE

3. On 1st February I had a long talk with General Messervy, who looked in on me on his return journey from Delhi to Rawalpindi. I also had a talk with Khizar, and suggested that he should now begin to consider his long term position. I pointed out that he could neither keep the Muslim League leaders in detention indefinitely, nor let them out unconditionally in order that they might continue the agitation. Khizar said that he would think the matter over, but until he was clear about the attitude of the Muslim League High Command and probable developments at the Centre, he could make no plans. He added rather oddly that Qizilbash was anxious to go to London in connection with a Privy Council case, and that he himself would like to spend the summer abroad. I told him that I doubted if this would be feasible.

8. The resolution by the Muslim League High Command on the Punjab situation was published in the newspapers this morning, and does not strike me as very impressive. The Muslim League have certain grievances, but the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance, 1946 was certainly not directed against the League and was not used against them before this agitation began. In fact not a single Muslim League MLA had been arrested or interfered with in any way—the Ordinance was my doing, and I was able to see that it was not abused. The statement does not mention at all the threats of the Punjab leaders to oust the coalition Ministry by a show

of force, which is Khizar's real *casus belli*. I fear that the League have made it very difficult for themselves to form a Government and have greatly advanced the case for the partition of the Punjab. The agitation cannot fail to be communal, since the Congress and the Sikhs are involved in the attack on the Premier. However, it is possible that the League will in the end be more conciliatory to the other communities, though as a party they are very sadly lacking in brains and political sense.

16. 'Delhi Muslims Observe Punjab Day'

Dawn, 3 February 1947.

A MAMMOTH public meeting attended by about 50,000 people and a huge half-a-mile procession, were the features of the Punjab Day which was observed with great enthusiasm by the Delhi Muslims on Sunday.

A batch of the burqa-clad Muslim women also joined the procession added greatly to the solemnity of the demonstration. The demonstrators carried effigies of Khizr Hyat which were burnt in the Chandni Chowk....

Hundreds of people crowded the balconies and lustily cheered the demonstrators. The demonstrators behaved in a disciplined manner and avoided slogans which might hurt the feelings of the non-Muslims.

Earlier a largely attended public meeting was held under the auspices of the Delhi Provincial Muslim League.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, presiding over the meeting...said that 24 January was a memorable date in the history of the revolutionary struggle for Indian independence. 'A great struggle has started there which has shown the country the way to achieve freedom,' he said.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan criticized the Punjab Ministry for the treatment meted out to the Punjab political leaders and the label of Communal detenus was put on them....

Mr Kazmi, Secretary of the Lucknow District Muslim League, appealed to the Hindus to join the Muslim struggle for civil liberties launched in the Punjab. He said that the struggle was not aimed at communal domination. Its purpose was to smash the citadels of British imperialism in the Punjab and to prepare the way for the overthrow of the imperialism in the country.

Mr Kazmi said: 'Muslims are against communal riots not because they are afraid of Section 144 but because they believe in the establishment of a sovereign independent Pakistan where minorities will enjoy the greatest security and freedom...'.

17. 'Women Tear-Gassed inside Police Van'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 4 February 1947.

LAHORE: A brutal and barbarous attempt to suffocate eleven arrested women in a closed police van, 12 miles out of Lahore, was the highlight of Khizr Administration's ruthless repression on the 11th day of the civil disobedience movement.

The heroines of the occasion were none else than Begum Feroze Khan Noon and 10 other women who had been arrested before the Civil Secretariat and removed by the police in a van to be 'dumped'.

Late in the evening, Begum Noon, severely burnt on face and neck, gave me this almost incredible account of what had happened. She said the police wanted them to get out on the deserted road 12 miles from Lahore; they asked to be taken to jail.

A police constable then threw a tear-gas bomb inside the van and closed the door.

'I rushed to the door to open it,' the Begum continued, 'Begum Shaukat Hayat and Begum Daultana, who were following in a car, came to our rescue. Meanwhile 4 girls got suffocated and fainted. I was burnt on neck and face. The clothes of other girls caught fire. In the confusion every one of us got hurt.'

'But this is not going to debar us from doing our duty,' concluded the wife of the now-jailed former Defence Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, with a glint in her eyes.

'Insha Allah we shall march on till the Punjab Government are forced to withdraw all restrictions on free speech, free press and normal political activities.'

18. Baldev Singh's Reflections on Muslim League Campaign

Letter from Baldev Singh to Wavell, 6 February 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 626-7.

During my recent visit to the Punjab in connection with the celebration of Kangaw Day by the 2/2 Punjab Regiment, I met the Punjab Governor and the Premier and discussed with them the unfortunate situation arising out of the defiance of Public Safety Ordinance by the Muslim League. There is no doubt in my mind that the Punjab Government was perfectly justified in imposing ban on the Rashtriya Seva Sangh and the Muslim League National Guard Organizations. If there was any doubt as regards the latter, the discovery of hundreds of steel helmets from their premises during search, should certainly arouse grave doubts of their peaceful intentions. Deliberate misinterpretation of the step by the Muslim League that it was an attack on the League itself made the Punjab Government lift the ban and this was done primarily in order that the League might not make this an excuse to stay out of the Constituent Assembly.

One should have thought that this gesture by the Punjab Government would end the League's agitation. Defiance of Law continues and now there is little doubt that this is being done in order to disrupt the Coalition Ministry. The League having tried and miserably failed in defeating it by Constitutional methods, seems now to be out to coerce it by rousing fanatical elements. Their leaders of course pretend to show as if this move is non-communal. It is nothing of the kind for the simple reason that the very people have in the past preached the most rabid communalism known in recent times. Some of us in fact have reason to fear that in reality the followers are being drilled against non-Muslims and that a widespread anti-Hindu and anti-Sikh movement is in the offing. The Sikhs particularly are greatly agitated over what is happening, for it is clear to them that if the present Ministry were to be hustled out by such terrorist tactics the League would succeed in capturing power in the Punjab without any regard to the interests of the minorities, particularly Sikhs. Once in power, they will obviously be in a position to organize their communal bodies like the Guards to overawe non-Muslims and dictate their terms—an eventuality which the Sikhs cannot contemplate without the gravest fears.

I am satisfied that the Punjab Government is doing its best to arrest lawlessness which has burst out. Their task is delicate in view of the fanatic and rabid communal ideology which has been consistently preached in the Punjab since the last General Elections. And they deserve all the help they need. My object in writing this to Your Excellency is to say that a subversive and dangerous movement of this type should not be supported by those leaders of the Muslim League who are in seats of power in the Interim Government. The Muslim masses—and indeed others—cannot understand why they should submit to the Orders of a Provincial Government when Members of Central Government openly advocate defiance thereof. The situation is

fraught with peril to all concerned and the time has come when the League representatives in the Interim Government should realize their responsibility. I have myself exercised the greatest restraint but Your Excellency will realize that when my colleagues can support their co-religionists, my community would very naturally expect me to do likewise and my silence might well be misconstrued in the present distressing situation.

I hope Your Excellency would give serious thought to the situation and take steps to see that the Punjab Government is not embarrassed any more by Members of the Interim Government.

19. Hindu-Sikh Responses to League Agitation

Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 12 February 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, p. 680.

IMMEDIATE

No. 69-G. Punjab situation. Hindus and Sikhs will not stand Muslim agitation much longer. Gopi Chand Bhargava has written personally to Premier saying that if he does not suppress agitation with all resources at his disposal Hindus must act on their own. Tara Singh has issued statement to Press to effect that Sikhs are in grave danger and must revive their 'Army' immediately under his command. Demonstrations are not however to be made until he gives the word. Premier is dealing personally with Gopi Chand and we are suppressing Tara Singh's statement. But we can only delay active non-Muslim intervention which in my judgment is now almost certain. Lahri Singh who saw me this morning said that Hindus could not be kept quiet for long.

2. Muslim League have anticipated all this and will allege that non-Muslim opposition is engineered by Premier and his colleagues, which is untrue. I think non-Muslims would have kept out for some time at least but for rowdiness of demonstrators in Lahore on 10th February. They are now practically convinced that civil liberties issue is bogus and that object of Punjab Muslim League is to seize power for Muslim Community. Once this conviction is general nothing can avert a grave communal disturbance.

3. Premier is in indirect touch with Nazimuddin who is, I understand, in Delhi. If agitation is called off he is prepared to review bans now in force under Ordinance and to remove a good many of them. But he cannot yield too much or non-Muslim agitation will be stimulated.

4. I do not wish to prejudice Premier's negotiations, but it might help if you could tell Liaquat or Nazimuddin of the extremely grave communal possibilities. On a long view the Punjab Muslims have already done themselves incalculable harm by their disregard of the very large non-Muslim minorities.

20. Report from Punjab Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report for Punjab for the Second Half of January 1947,
12 February 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/1/47, NAI.

Confidential.

POLITICAL.—There has been considerable unrest in the Province since the 24th of January on which day the Punjab Government declared the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and

the Muslim League National Guards to be unlawful associations under the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 1908. The Punjab Government took this action because, in the present state of communal feeling, private communal armies are a danger to peace, and, although the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance controlled the open activities of these bodies, their continued existence and surreptitious perseverance were reacting in a manner which was damaging to the public nerve in a marked degree. Government was satisfied that the action it had determined to take was overdue and was encouraged to hope that it would have public support by reason of the large volume of complaint which had been voiced over a protracted period by both the Hindu and Muslim communities. The declaration of the two organizations to be unlawful was followed by searches of offices and premises, which are usual in such circumstances. The action taken passed without incident in all places except Lahore where leaders of the Muslim League obstructed the Police and were arrested. This was followed by deliberate and instigated defiance of control orders in force under the provisions of the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance and further arrests were made.

The League leaders who were arrested made it clear that they interpreted the declaration in respect of Muslim League National Guards as an attack upon the Muslim League as a political party. As nothing was further from the thoughts of Government than any such attack, the decision was taken to release them so that they could reconsider their position in the light of Government's assurances that it had sought no political advantage by this action it had taken. In consequence, they were released on the 27th of January and on that and on the following day they made it clear by their conduct and in their public pronouncements that their attitude was unchanged and that continued large scale defiance of law was their determination. They also made it clear that in their demands they coupled the cancellation of the declaration making the Muslim League National Guards unlawful with the withdrawal of the orders which were in force under the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance, prohibiting meetings and processions in certain places.

Unfortunately, due to the attitude of the League leaders and their misleading propaganda, the impression persisted amongst Muslims that the League had been attacked as a party. In its determination to remove this wrong belief and in its readiness to go to the fullest possible extent in order to do so, Government decided to withdraw the declaration against the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh and the Muslim League National Guards and to take the risk involved in doing so, in order to set all doubts finally at rest. With the pronouncement of this decision it was also made known that in the present state of communal tension Government was not prepared to agree to the general withdrawal of emergency restrictions, particularly those on demonstrations and meetings and intended to maintain all restrictions considered essential and to deal adequately with those who broke the law.

The reception given by the Muslim League leaders to this further pronouncement was as unsatisfactory as their...conduct throughout had been, and in the statement they issued and in their speeches they made it clear that they attached little importance to the ban which had been lifted and that their real object was to overthrow the Punjab coalition Ministry by show of force. In these circumstances, in the interests of democratic principles and of communal peace, it was clear that the threat was one which must be met. The League leaders were rearrested and committed to jail.

The rearrests took place in the early morning of the 29th of January. The 29th, the 30th and the 31st were days of wide-spread demonstrations and agitation in some cases in company with violence. One Superintendent of Police was seriously injured while other Police officers

did not emerge unscathed. On the other side too there were casualties and in Simla one man died from the injuries he received. On the whole, however, there was no general resort to violence, and no loss of control by the forces of Government. Since the first days of intense excitement the situation has slowly improved, helped by a policy which removes the leaders and organizers and by the fact that the ground Government conceded largely removed any semblance of a grievance of a kind which would keep Muslim feeling at a pitch prepared and ready to disregard all consequences. In the absence of outside interference, therefore, and provided disorder does not turn to communalism, there is some reason for hoping that the situation will not worsen.

The reactions of other political parties to the Muslim League agitation have varied. The Sikhs, through their leader, Master Tara Singh, have roundly condemned a course of action which they say has the supremacy of one community over the others as its objective, and they have voiced strong support for the action Government has taken. The Congress has also—and naturally—identified itself with Government. Other Hindu parties have maintained discrete silence while being grimly amused at the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh's reinstatement in legality as an incidental result of the League's action. Of the Muslim parties only the Khaksars have attempted to make a joint cause with the League and their advances were repulsed because their sincerity was held in grave doubt.

In respect of politics on an all-India level little comment of value can be made mainly because provincial interest has been largely absorbed by provincial happenings. The Sikhs, however, have found some satisfaction in the representation given to them on the Minorities Advisory committee, and, possibly because of this, have been encouraged to voice their other demands with a growing determination to secure them or go their own way. Congress has found little to grumble about, and much to applaud, in the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly and most Hindus are pleased with signs which they accept and interpret as proof of the abandonment of a policy of appeasement to the Muslim League. Towards the end of the fortnight any expectation which had existed earlier and any hope that the Muslim League would change its attitude had vanished. Further indication of the League's intentions are now awaited, particularly by the Muslims who are as prepared as ever to obey its dictates....

21. 'Tremendous Upsurge in Punjab against Tiwana's Anti-civil Laws'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 13 February 1947.

LAHORE, Wednesday.—SARGODHA—Punjab Premier's home-district—experienced a severe lathi charge on Wednesday when more than 20 persons were seriously injured. The police baton failed to break the indomitable spirit of people of Sargodha.

Authentic information reaching from that district shows that the Punjab Premier has utilized the Muslim League campaign to punish those who had opposed him during the last elections.

Arrests of Kh Shamsheer Ali, Mian Abdul Aziz, Ch Faiz Ahmed, Khan Mohammed Khan of Sahiwal, Mian Qadir Baksh, Quraishi Mohammed Abdullah, Ch Abdul Hameed and Fateh Mohammed Sial were made under Tiwana's revenge code rather than Ordinance rule.

A batch of Aligarh students was arrested at Sargodha and they were taken 20 miles into the country, and dumped. As a protest against this brutal treatment, students of Government College, Sargodha, went on strike. They took out a large procession which was joined by thousands of villagers.

Secret consultations are reported to have been going on between the Punjab Premier and Sardar Baldev Singh at the former's residence in Lahore Cantonment on Wednesday. The reporters who got a scent of the Defence Member's arrival tried their level best to contact him but he eluded them like a slippery eel.

TIWANA-BALDEV MEETINGS

One tangible result of the Defence Member's frequent confabulation with the Punjab Premier is the highly unreasonable and even provocative statement by Master Tara Singh on the Punjab campaign. It is not a mere coincidence that the arrival of Sardar Baldev Singh invariably almost always evoked the spiteful outbursts from the veteran Akali leader against the Muslim League.

While on the one hand the Punjab Government's repressive policy is in full swing against Muslims, on the other hand they are withdrawing ban piecemeal on public meetings and carrying out of processions in various districts 'according to plan'. I understand that the ban on public meeting and processions will be withdrawn in Rawalpindi district....

22. 'Punjab Congress Appeals for Peace'

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 13 February 1947.

LAHORE. 12 Feb.: As earnest appeal to all the people in Punjab. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others irrespective of their party affiliation, to maintain discipline, to show tolerance and forbearance in their dealings with each other and refrain from doing anything, even in face of provocation, which might lead to a breach of public peace, was made by the Working Committee of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee in a resolution which the Committee adopted at its meeting held yesterday, at the Bradlaugh Hall. The appeal was made 'in view of the tense situation prevailing in the province'.

Dr S.D. Kitchlew presided at the meeting, which continued for four hours....

23. 'Punjab Campaign Is an Indication of What League Can Do on an All-India Scale—Liaquat Ali Khan'

Dawn, 14 February 1947.

Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, Finance Minister in India's Interim Government said on Thursday that the Muslim League civil disobedience campaign against Punjab Provincial Ministry and its ban on meetings and processions—the first of its kind ever launched by the Muslim League—'show that our people are ready to make any sacrifice come what may.'

Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, who is also the Secretary of the All-India Muslim League, said in an interview that the Muslim League's Punjab campaign was unplanned and unprepared although the coalition ministry had 'harassed people who voted against it' in many ways including distribution of rationed goods.

Hundreds upon hundreds of Muslims have defied the Ministry's ban for 20 consecutive days since the Muslim League National Guards was declared illegal—an order later rescinded and seven top-ranking leaders were arrested for obstructing the police during their raid on the offices of the Muslim League National Guards.

Mr Liaquat Ali Khan said that Punjab demonstrations which spread rapidly throughout the province were an indication of what the Muslim League could do on an All-India scale if it became necessary although 'I couldn't guarantee that it would remain always non-violent.'

He also pointed out that League leaders of the Punjab, many of whom renounced British titles last year, were the first to rush out and offer themselves for arrest and said he expected that it would be generally true if a general movement began.

The Finance Minister praised Punjab Muslims for maintaining discipline and avoiding involvement in communal or Hindu-Muslim disturbance and said that the Punjab Government was at present 'paralysed.'

'This is something new in India', he added. 'Muslim League has never done anything before by unconstitutional means.'

Muslim Leaguers were at present excluded from the Punjab Coalition Ministry although Mr Liaquat Ali Khan pointed out that they represent the largest community in the province and form the largest single party in the Legislature. Congress, Sikhs and few non-League Muslims form ministry.

Mr Liaquat Ali Khan concluded that he expected the provincial ministry to fall as a result of League's campaign, adding 'how long the Government will go on and how long the people will go on, I cannot say. But I have confidence in the people.'—APA

24. Report from Punjab Province

Extract from the Punjab Fortnightly Report for the First Half of February 1947,
19 February 1947

Home Poll (I), File No.18/2/1947, NAI.

POLITICAL.—The agitation which the Muslim League commenced on the 24th of January has continued until the time of drafting this report. It has affected all districts in the Province in a varying degree, and in places there have been situations of some seriousness. On the whole, however, although the campaign is one of deliberate disobedience and defiance of law conducted with a definite, undemocratic political motive it has been carried on with less provocation than might have been expected, and with much exhortation to avoid the pitfalls of communalism. Because of this, and helped by marked restraint by Government's forces, exercised commendably throughout a trying time, tempers have not become frayed to the dangerous extent which could so easily have happened and the agitation has shown signs of developing a routine character, which although it destroys respect for law which is regularly and blatantly being defied, at least reduces the likelihood of the disorders quickly assuming proportions which would be difficult to control without the use of drastic force. At the same time with mass agitation going on, and with extremists among the organizers and the crowds the possibility of unwanted developments is always present and the chances of the situation worsening have to be accepted. So far there has been no sign that Muslim League leaders at large or in jail have been persuaded to a sense of responsibility or to reasonableness. In the circumstances the early restoration of the Province to its normal life cannot confidently be expected.

While the happenings which have been taking place in the Punjab have caused some quickening of Muslim feeling in other provinces, there has been very little active intervention in the agitation by persons from outside ... Some volunteers from Delhi have taken part in

processions in Lahore and elsewhere, and some from Sind have been noticed in Multan. Their presence has hardly been felt, however, and so far they have not increased provincial difficulties ... from various League leaders, including members of the Executive Council, have been clothed in more importance. Among those who came was Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din, ex Premier of Bengal, accompanied by two others who lack his prominence, and his presence in Lahore resulted in increased activity. The situation, however, quickly reassumed its normal proportions on his departure.

The response given by the Muslims to the agitation is not whole-hearted, and this applies particularly to the middle classes. Some believe that the community would have been better served if the ban making the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh unlawful had remained. Others continue to recoil from action which carries such grave responsibility. At the same time there is no obvious readiness on any Muslim side to voice open condemnation of the League. The Khaksar group is the only Muslim organization outside the League which has attempted to give the League support and its advances have been rebuffed. Among Hindus and Sikhs resentment to the agitation is growing and, particularly in the case of the latter, in an ominous degree. On the 12th February, in the second statement he has issued against ... agitation since it started, Master Tara Singh declared that it was communal in its essentials and had as its purpose the domination of the Punjab by Muslims. He called on the Sikhs to prepare themselves to face the Muslim League onslaught towards this and to reorganize the 'Akal Fauj', the Sikh volunteer organization whose prowess in the Punjab has not been forgotten. There is but little doubt that the Sikhs, gravely disturbed as they are by events in Bengal, the Frontier and in the Punjab, will respond in the degree their leaders require to orders of this kind.

In Provincial politics, apart from what has already been discussed there is little of interest to recount, except that the Provincial Congress is facing a domestic crisis of some importance. A vote of no-confidence has been tabled against those who exercise provincial control and the two parties to the dispute are engaged in canvassing all the support they can. It is not possible to say yet with any assurance of being right which group will emerge successful. The result, if there is no compromise, may have repercussions outside the Congress in the Punjab and, it has been hinted, may affect relations in the all-India Congress command.

Provincial affairs have absorbed much of the attention and interest which would have been given otherwise to the political situation at the Centre. Nevertheless the understanding that the Congress members of the Interim Government have delivered an ultimatum to Britain has created great public anxiety and misgiving. The majority of politically minded Hindus is solidly behind Congress however in a mood of frustrated determination and Muslims are pleased with what they accept as the proof of League power. Of the three communities the Sikhs are undoubtedly the most perturbed at the shape political events are taking. Their apprehensions that the Centre will not be able to withstand the demand for Pakistan and the Muslim League agitation have drawn them further from the League, making any understanding between the two now unlikely, and have driven them more to the thought of a separate Sikh-Hindu State made up of the Punjab districts where Muslims are in a minority and the Sikh States. The Panthic Prithinidhi Board considered this matter when it met on the 30th of January and set up a sub-committee to examine it in full detail. In their public speeches certain of the Sikh leaders are now saying that they can expect nothing from Congress which has consistently refused to give them more than paper assurances. Their demand for a State of their own will, therefore, be made in the Constituent Assembly and if need be they will defeat the Pakistan plan with their own resources.

So far as extremist groups go the central developments have increased their confidence in their view that with or without Congress leading them another movement is inevitable. None of them, including the Congress Socialist Group is, however, particularly active in preparing for mass action....

25. Discussion with Khwaja Nazimuddin about League's Position in Punjab

Extract from a Letter from S.E. Abbott to G.E.B. Abell Forwarding a Note by Evan Jenkins, 19 February 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. III, pp. 355–61.

[Dear Abell,]

I am desired by His Excellency to forward two copies of a note recorded by him after an interview with Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din yesterday, as this may be of some interest to His Excellency the Viceroy. The Premier does not favour the idea of legislation to replace the present Punjab Public Safety Ordinance, as he considers that his own followers might insist on emasculating any Bill on the lines of the present Ordinance that might be put before the Assembly. This may or may not be the true reason, and, as you know, he has an aversion from introducing any legislative measure in the present circumstances. At the moment therefore somewhat desultory negotiations for terminating the present agitation are proceeding purely on the short-term basis of the removal of certain bans as indicated in the paper attached to the note.

[Yours sincerely,
S.E. ABBOTT]

ENCLOSURE

NOTE BY JENKINS

18th February, 1947

I saw Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din at 10 a.m. today. I handed him a copy of the following table showing the communal distribution of the population of the Punjab.

Population 1941
(Round Millions)

Divisions. Muslims. Others.

1. Rawalpindi [with]		
2. Multan	9	2
3. Lahore	4	3
4. Jullundur [with]		
5. Ambala	3	7
	<hr/>	
[Totals]	16	12
	<hr/>	
[Overall Total]	28	

I said that from this table it was quite clear that no one community could rule the Punjab except by conquest.... Excluding the possibility of civil war and conquest, there were only

two long-term alternatives—(a) a united Punjab not under Muslim domination, but under Muslim leadership, and (b) a partition into two or possibly three small States. Up to the death of Sir Sikander Hyat Khan in 1942, the Muslim leaders of the Punjab—particularly Sir Fazl-i-Husain—had always assumed alternative (a) to be the right one. They had had a considerable measure of success.... If the Muslim League had chosen to build upon the Unionist idea, the Punjab could have been a model of 'Pakistan in action' with the Muslims in a very strong position and the non-Muslim minorities co-operating freely and contentedly with them. I did not know why the Unionist idea had been abandoned.... The Muslim League had fought the General Election of 1946 on extreme communal lines, and had given the impression to the non-Muslim minorities that they intended to establish undiluted Muslim domination. Having done so, they would presumably give the non-Muslim minorities such share as they thought proper in the administration. I believed that this policy was absolutely wrong and that the Muslim League aim was impossible of achievement. In fact I thought the Punjab Muslims had placed themselves in a position of extreme embarrassment and danger. The non-Muslim minorities regarded the Muslim League with hatred and fear, and the Sikhs would certainly demand a partition. If they did demand a partition, the Muslims might find themselves relegated to a petty Muslim State, which would include little of the industry and an inferior share of the power resources of the Punjab as it now stands.

Continuing I said that the present agitation illustrated my point. The Muslim League might succeed in dislodging the present Ministry, but if they did so, what would they do next? Mamdot might win over a few of the Scheduled Caste Members of the Assembly, but I did not think that the Hindus or Sikhs would join him in forming a Government. There seemed to be three other ways in which the agitation might end. There might be a communal conflict so grave as to swamp it; again the Muslim League might be completely defeated; yet again there might be some kind of compromise. If there were a communal conflict, it might last for a long time and could not improve the broad Muslim position. The complete defeat of the Muslim League was not, so far as I was aware, wanted by anybody—it would cause great bitterness and the Muslims generally would gain nothing by it. If there were a compromise, it would do little good unless it paved the way for better relations between the Muslim League and the non-Muslim minorities. I asked Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din point-blank whether the Muslim League would co-operate in an all-parties Ministry, which is what the Punjab really needs at the present time.

2. Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din expressed considerable interest in my analysis of the Muslim position.... He also admitted that in the Punjab the Sikhs were a powerful and disturbing element.... He believed that the Muslim League were anxious to co-operate with the non-Muslim minorities, but their difficulty was that they did not yet know the shape of Pakistan and were not in a position to make any long-term commitments. They would be glad to enter the Government if the other parties—and particularly the Sikhs—would co-operate with them. But he feared that they could not now co-operate with the Unionist Muslims. I interjected here that the present Premier was in my judgement the only Muslim leader likely to hold a mixed Cabinet together. Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din was inclined to agree, but seemed to think that in their present mood the Muslim League would have nothing to do with any Unionist Muslim.

3. We then passed to a discussion of the Sikh attitude, and I explained broadly the Sikh party alignments. I said that among the Akalis, Giani Kartar Singh was now dominant. He had in the recent past been in favour of some rapprochement with the League, but the agitation seemed to have convinced him that this was wrong, and he was now advocating a separate

Sikh State A Muslim–Sikh alliance had been possible, though perhaps not very likely, some weeks ago; but I thought it would now be impossible for some little time.

4. I asked whether Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din favoured some compromise of the present agitation. He said that he certainly favoured a compromise, but only on reasonable terms. The Muslim League were very sore at the restrictions imposed upon civil liberties—they could not understand why they in common with others should be prevented from airing their political views. The present prohibitions seemed to be quite unnecessary, and the Karachi resolution of the Muslim League Working Committee was a reasonable basis for discussion. The Muslim League did not contend that the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance, 1946, should be withdrawn but must be satisfied that it was not being abused and would not be abused in future. I said that in my opinion the ‘Civil liberties’ grievance was a red herring. I traced the history of the Ordinance and described the action taken under it up to 24th January last. I admitted that in some cases the District Magistrates had used their powers too lavishly; but I had been in close touch with members of the Muslim League, and particularly MLAs, on all my tours, and the Ordinance had never once been mentioned to me. Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din then admitted that the Ordinance and the orders passed under it were not the real *casus belli*. He said that the Muslim League were in fact aggrieved at the conduct of the Coalition Ministry since it took office. Even during the General Election there had been unwarrantable interference through officials, and once the Ministry was in the saddle persecution and victimization had continued. I said that to the best of my belief all parties had endeavoured to secure the support of officials at the General Election; conditions varied from district to district. Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din had referred to Lyallpur. I could say nothing about the conditions there, but in Montgomery I had been told on good authority that all the Police officers employed on Election duty had assisted the Muslim League candidate. As to the stories of persecution and victimization, I thought that Punjabis did not generally appreciate the distinction between political patronage and ordinary rights. ...when rewards or appointments were in question, party Governments did not ordinarily show special favour to their political opponents. Much of the Muslim League grievance seemed to me to be based on a complete misunderstanding of the position under a party Government. There was also the difficulty that below the Legislature, the Ministry and the Secretariat the real agents of the Government were not elected local authorities, but officials and various non-official helpers, some paid and some unpaid. Under the old irremovable Government there was not much question of divided loyalty. Like the permanent officials the non-official helpers were ‘Government men’ and were expected only to deal firmly with any anti-Government movements. They were seldom placed in a position in which their party affiliation conflicted with their duty to Government. Now the situation had completely changed, and many people who had been in high favour under the old regime found themselves out of favour. I did not see how this could be helped; no doubt things would adjust themselves in time. I did not think that any Government could tolerate paid helpers, such as Zaildars, openly assisting the Opposition. Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din said that he agreed with much of this, but that he had heard that people like Zaildars were expected not merely to refrain from political activity but to assist the parties in power to which they were hostile. Passing on to the question of rights, I said that the main complaint was that supporters of the Muslim League had been denied their fair share of controlled commodities, such as cloth, sugar, and others. The fact was that controlled commodities were short all over the Punjab, and that in the Eastern Punjab the Hindu Jats could claim that the shortage was due to the usual neglect of this distant part of the Province, while in the Muslim districts of the North and West Muslim zamindars could argue that they

were suffering for their political views. Any section of the population could make a grievance of the shortages and could attribute sinister motives to Government. But I thought that the Muslim League grievance was not as well founded as Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din supposed.

5. We agreed that whatever the real *casus belli* might be, the present agitation was nominally concerned with Civil Liberties and that any settlement must deal with this topic. I told Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din that I thought the Premier would be prepared to meet the Muslim League up to a point, but he had to consider the attitude of the non-Muslim minorities, which was of very great importance. The agitation, if continued, might lead to a serious communal clash; in the same way a complete capitulation by the Premier might make the non-Muslim minorities, particularly the Sikhs, very aggressive. The Sikhs would, I thought, say that Government yielded everything to a show of force; that this meant the approach of undiluted Muslim Raj; and that they must demonstrate to the public generally, and to the Muslims in particular, that the Khalsa could still produce larger meetings and noisier processions than the Muslim League. ... Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din said that he agreed that Government must have the power to prohibit activities such as processions and meetings when necessary, but he felt that the power must be given by legislation rather than by Ordinance and must be used only on appropriate occasions. I asked him whether the Muslim League would co-operate with the Ministry in passing a Public Safety Bill to replace the present Ordinance. At first he laughed at this suggestion and said that the gulf between the Ministry and the Muslim League was so wide that he hardly thought co-operation of this kind would be possible. I said I had [?not] consulted the Premier; but if the Muslim League would co-operate in such a Bill, it might be possible for the Premier (a) to persuade the Congress and Panthic Parties to do the same, and (b) to withdraw the prohibitions on meetings (probably not on processions) practically everywhere, subject to the right of District Magistrates to retain the prohibitions in any place where there is in fact an imminent apprehension of communal trouble and to impose or reimpose prohibitions as may be found essential for the preservation of communal peace. Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din eventually expressed considerable interest in this idea and asked me to put it to the Premier.

6. At the end of our conversation I said again that I was deeply concerned about the Muslim position in the Punjab. ... Their numerical majority entitled them to leadership, and to retain their natural leadership they had only to treat the non-Muslim minorities as partners and not as inferiors and subordinates. Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din finally said that he would discuss my suggestions with members of the Muslim League in Lahore and that if we decided to proceed with them he would be prepared to fly to Karachi to get the personal sanction of Mr Jinnah to them. I made it clear that I could not commit the Premier and must consult him before any further move could be made.

7. I saw the Premier at 11-45 a.m. and gave him an account of my talk with Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din.... The Premier promised to consult his colleagues and to let me know later what he thought. I said that I should like, if possible, to get into touch with Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din later in the day. I thought that if a settlement were to be arranged, we should get it through as quickly as possible.

[E.M. JENKINS]



26. Nazimuddin's Discussion with Jenkins

Extract from a Letter from S.E. Abbott to G.E.B. Abell Forwarding a Note by Evan Jenkins, 20 February 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. III, pp. 362–5.

[Dear Abell,]

In continuation of my D.O. letter No. G.S. 83 of 19th February, I am desirous to send two copies of a further note of the interview which His Excellency the Governor had with Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din yesterday.

[Yours sincerely,
S.E. ABBOTT.]

ENCLOSURE

NOTE BY JENKINS

19th February, 1947

I had a further talk with Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din at 4 p.m. today....

2. ...I told Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din that the Premier was not willing to make an undertaking to introduce a Bill to replace the Punjab Safety Ordinance, 1946, a part of any settlement. The Premier's view was that any Government would require powers practically identical with those given by the Ordinance. The Opposition might interpret an undertaking differently from himself; moreover he had to contend not only with the Opposition but with some of the wilder Congressmen on the Government benches, for example, Mr Tilak Raj Chadha. The Premier certainly did not rule out the possibility of a Bill, but he thought that the details of the legislation would require careful examination and perhaps discussion with party leaders, or something of that kind. Otherwise the Premier was disposed to promote a settlement if he could, but he was not willing to withdraw the ban on processions. I understood that Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din had insisted only on a withdrawal of the bans on meetings.

3. Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din said that he hoped there had been no misunderstanding. He stood by the Karachi resolution of the Working Committee of the Muslim League and would insist on all bans being withdrawn. I replied that processions were much more dangerous than meetings; the fact that the Muslim League processions had not led to trouble was not conclusive—communal trouble seldom occurred when one community was attacking Government. But we were expecting trouble at Amritsar within the next few days; the Sikhs had begun to form their private army and might move at any time—possibly on Friday, the 21st.

I added that the Premier was in touch, not personally but indirectly with some of the Muslim League leaders in jail, and that I felt there was little more that Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din and I could do at the moment. The Premier and his colleagues had better be left to follow their own line; perhaps there might be further news tomorrow.

4. Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din agreed that since this was essentially a local dispute, some understanding between the Premier and the Punjab leaders would be appropriate; but he must revert to the question of the Ordinance. He felt it quite wrong that I as Governor should relieve a tottering Ministry of the obligation to legislate; it was my clear duty to force the Premier to bring in a suitable Bill. I said that I was the sole judge, subject to the Governor-General's concurrence and supervision, of the use of my discretionary powers. When the Ordinance was promulgated, there was no doubt about its necessity, and I was not prepared to haggle with the Ministers about its terms. Malik Firoz Khan Noon had said that when he was in

Bihar studying the disturbances there, he had seen the text of the Ordinance and had been relieved that in one Province at least timely preventive action had been taken. In the ordinary way the Ordinance would expire in May next. I could continue it by further Ordinance for another six months, subject of course to the Governor-General's concurrence and a report to Parliament. I was by no means hostile to legislation, but I would have to be satisfied that suitable legislation would in fact be passed. I pointed out that the Muslim League, if they took office, would need special emergency powers just as much as the present coalition Ministry. I asked Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din where the Opposition would stand in this matter. He said that he could not guarantee Opposition support for any Bill, and to this I replied that if I was faced with faction and irresponsibility, I should have to act as I thought best. In principle it was of course right that there should be legislation but I was concerned with the maintenance of order in the Province as a whole. ...

....As I had told him before even if the Coalition Ministry resigned tomorrow, I did not think that Mamdot could form a Government. Provincial Politics were unreal because the all-India political parties were controlled by their respective High Commands—thus, though the Premier had resisted interference by the Congress High Command, Congress Ministers were undoubtedly influenced by all-India Congress policy and Muslim League leaders could act only under instructions from the Muslim League High Command. If the Punjab were an island, we could settle our disputes very easily. The short point was that unless the Muslim League abandoned their present extreme communal attitude and made it clear that they were prepared to treat the Hindus and Sikhs as equals, they would get nowhere. No striking recantation or statement on the part of the Muslim League was required only an obvious and sincere change of policy in the Punjab.

7. Our talk lasted for about 50 minutes. Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din was much less amiable than he was yesterday, but on the whole friendly and frank. I ended by saying that the real trouble in the Punjab was that not one Muslim League leader had the brains of a hen and that until common sense and leadership were forthcoming I could see little hope of any improvement. I reminded him before he left that our talk must be kept confidential, and that nothing more than the statement I had suggested when the talk began should be put out.

[E.M. JENKINS]

27. League Negotiations with the Punjab Government

Extract from a Letter from Iftikhar Husain Khan of Mamdot to M.A. Jinnah,
22 February 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 58–62.

[KASUR SUB-JAIL, KASUR]

My dear Quaid-i-Azam,

You must have learnt that the negotiations for a compromise are pending. Maulana Sahib will give you all the information as to what offer has been made; what were our original demands; to what extent the Government has conceded or is prepared to concede; what is our present strength, and other things. The decision of the Committee of Action has been forwarded to you to solicit your opinion. But I must confess that in order to avoid a scene amongst ourselves, particularly inside a jail, I did not acquaint the members of the Committee as to how this thing started. I am now writing to you to say that on the 14th or the 15th of this month, Malik

Firoz Khan Noon, who is in my jail, wrote a letter to a DIG saying that things had taken a serious turn and that he hoped it was not the intention of either party to take matters to such an extent. He said that there was a chance of an amicable settlement and asked the DIG to see him. When he had despatched the letter, he informed me and I scolded him and could not do more because it had gone.

In the light of this fact, I think that our position is very weak and if the negotiations break, Khizar is sure to make use of the letter and it will have a very demoralizing effect on the poor masses. I must say that we were going very strong and that there was a genuine and big response. We could carry on but for this unfortunate incident. Anyhow we will await your instruction[s]. In case you do not want us to carry on the struggle then we will accept the terms offered by the Government and call off the movement; and if you order us to carry on then we will do so whatever happens. I am sure Khizar will not dare to face the House for getting approval for the Ordinance. He will rather break and face the agitation.

Yours sincerely,
I.H. KHAN

ENCLOSURE

Iftikhar Husain Khan Mamdot to E.M. Jenkins
(Copy to M.A. Jinnah)

SUB-JAIL, KASUR,
Undated [February 1947]

Your Excellency,

....5. My Committee met at Kasur Jail on the evening of 21st February, and we have arrived at the following decisions which I am placing before Your Excellency:

- (a) My Committee is pleased that the Punjab Government is prepared to remove the ban on public meetings in all places where they are now prohibited.
- (b) My Committee emphatically demands that the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance be placed before the Punjab Assembly during its next session, so that the duly elected representatives of the people may have an opportunity of reviewing the executive measures of the Government and reflecting public opinion on them. My Committee is confident that the Punjab Premier must himself be anxious to adhere to the elementary democratic convention which permits and justifies only those executive measures which meet with the approval of the majority of the legislature to which he is responsible and to which he owes all his constitutional power and position. Besides, my Committee is relieved to find that the Punjab Premier is anxious to give us the fullest opportunity of challenging his party constitutionally in the House in a fortnight's time, and has sufficiently revised his past policy [so] as to admit of the possibility of the resumption of constitutional methods by the opposition....

6. The final position of my Committee, therefore, is that if the Government (i) is prepared to remove all bans on public meetings throughout the province, and (ii) is willing to place the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance before the Punjab Legislative Assembly at its next session, the Punjab Provincial Muslim League is prepared to call off its present Civil Disobedience Movement. It is of course understood that as an integral part of this settlement the Government

will release all persons arrested or detained or convicted under any law or ordinance during this Movement.

[IFTIKHAR HUSAIN KHAN]

28. Jinnah Drafts the Terms of the Compromise between Punjab Government and Muslim League

Extract from a Letter from M.A Jinnah to Iftikhar Husain Khan of Mamdot, 23 February 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 65–8.

OLD GOVERNMENT HOUSE, KARACHI

My dear Mamdot,

I have received your letter of 22nd February, 1947 brought to me by Maulana Dawood Ghaznavi and also the typewritten reply that you propose to send to the Governor of the Punjab along with the proposals of the Punjab Government. The following points arise:

- (i) that the ban imposed on public meetings and processions under Section 144 should be removed;
- (ii) withdraw all restrictive measures on political activities and not to misuse the special powers conferred by the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance; and
- (iii) release all those who have been imprisoned, arrested or detained.

This was indicated in the Resolution of the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League, passed at Karachi on 31st January, and I see from your demands, embodied in the typewritten copy, that you are inclined to yield with regard to the processions. Then there remain three main points:

- (i) that the Government should remove the ban on public meetings throughout the province;
- (ii) that the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance should be placed before the Punjab Legislative Assembly at its next session; and
- (iii) that the Government will release all persons arrested, detained or convicted under any law or ordinance during this movement.

I see that you have, therefore, as a compromise, not insisted on the removal of the ban on processions, but the other three matters stand, whereas the Punjab Government is unwilling to place the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance before the Punjab Legislative Assembly for them to adopt such measures as they may think proper. This is contrary to accepted principles and against constitutional precedents and democracy. In every province in India similar Ordinances have been placed at the first opportunity before their respective legislatures; and the Muslim League Ministry in Bengal and the Congress Ministry in Madras are following this precedent, and so is Sind....

The Punjab Government is willing to remove the ban on meetings and I take it that they are willing to agree to release all those classes referred to above; but they are not willing to place the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance before the Assembly at its next meeting. That is a position which is incompatible with constitutional precedents and what has already happened in other provinces as I have pointed out above; and it is a matter of very great principle and I cannot advise you to give it up because, now that you have raised this point, if you give it

up, then it can only mean your acceptance of or acquiescence in the present Ordinance rule continuing indefinitely without their placing the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance before the Assembly as long as they like and getting the sanction of the Legislature, which is the only proper constitutional and democratic method for a popular Government to adopt. As to the other two points, I understand that the Punjab Government are willing to remove the ban on public meetings and release those who are classified and referred to above.

You and the prominent leaders of the Punjab started this movement and, I think, rightly as it was becoming intolerable, especially when the Muslim National Guards organization was declared unlawful. It was the last straw on the camel's back and let me say that there was no other course open to you but to face the situation as you did with great courage and determination and you have carried on this movement magnificently. Not only I am proud of the Punjab and its leadership, but the whole of Muslim India is with you and the whole world is watching in admiration and with great deal of sympathy and disapproval of the policy and actions of the Punjab Government.

Your stand is a right one. This is the testing moment for you to come to a decision. I have made it clear that you started it, you have carried it on magnificently and it is for you now to come to a settlement which should be as honourable and as creditable not only so far as the Musalmans of the Punjab are concerned but the All India Muslim League; and I am sure that you will take a unanimous decision.

Honourable defeat, if it is to be, is better than a compromise which is discreditable and contrary to accepted constitutional principles and precedents and the rules of democracy for which we are working. I, therefore, have come to the conclusion that your demands are just and right and you have shown a spirit of compromise in yielding with regard to the ban on processions, but it is now for you to consider the whole matter and take such decisions as you think proper. The responsibility rests with you and we have made it clear from the very beginning that settlement must be arrived at between you and the Punjab Government, on the clear understanding that it is for your Committee to decide.

I hope I have made my views clear to you and I wish you luck and Godspeed. We must be firm and determined and take the consequences, but we should not be a party to any compromise which is discreditable, in order to avoid further suffering, once having gone in for them.

Hoping you are well,

With very kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
M.A. JINNAH

29. Impact of HMG's 20 February Statement on League's Negotiations with the Punjab Government

Extract from a Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Pethick-Lawrence, 25 February 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 814–16.

IMMEDIATE

SECRET

...2. Position has been radically changed by His Majesty's Government's statement of 20th February. Premier is now not prepared to go through with repression, exercise of which could be

successfully undertaken but which would not facilitate peaceful transfer of power in 16 months' time. Attitude of services in changed conditions is most uncertain and IG Police reports that block of his British Officers are now thoroughly disgusted with all parties including Muslim League and would like to be released as soon as possible. My own position in exercise of my special responsibilities is naturally impaired and though I may still have some slight personal influence Party Leaders are beginning to realize that constitutionally Governor will soon cease to count.

3. In this somber background Premier decided to settle with League on undertaking to remove ban on public meetings and to introduce Public Safety Bill at Budget session of Assembly which begins 3rd March. Bans on military drill, carrying of arms and processions will remain. Premier hopes to complete negotiations by this evening but Muslim League Leaders are truculent and may make further demands. Punjab Public Safety Ordinance which was made under Section 89 of Constitution Act normally lapses in May. If satisfactory Bill is passed by Assembly I would withdraw Ordinance on giving assent to Bill.

4. Premier's idea is to endeavour before, during and if necessary after budget session to promote formation of All-Parties Ministry or League-Sikh Coalition. It is clear that in new conditions present Ministry cannot carry on for long and that if chaos amounting possibly to civil war is to be avoided there must be a Ministry representing bulk of Muslims and Sikhs.

5. I do not wish to be alarmist but during next few days and possibly weeks the situation has most dangerous possibilities. Unless Muslim League change their tone completely which seems most improbable there may be an abandonment of present constitution and attempts to establish Muslim or Sikh rule by force. I intend to avoid a Section 93 situation if I possibly can but prospect of independence in 16 months' time is not conducive to moderation and Muslim League will act under instructions from Jinnah who knows little and cares less about the real interests of the Punjab.

Repeated to the Viceroy.

30. 'Agreement Arrived at with the Government: Mamdot's Direction to Call Off Civil Disobedience Movement'

Dawn, 27 February 1947.

As a sequel to the compromise arrived at between the Punjab Government and the Muslim League the Government passed order for the release of the civil disobedience prisoners....

As a result of the compromise, the Khan of Mamdot, President, Punjab Provincial Muslim League, has called off the movement.

The compromise between the Punjab Government and the Muslim League in connection with the 34-day old agitation in the Punjab was announced at noon today.... The following are the terms of the compromise:

1. The ban on public meetings is removed.
2. To bring forward such legislation as may be considered necessary to preserve peace and public order in place of the present Punjab Public Safety Ordinance.
3. The release of all prisoners detained under-trial or convicted in connection with the movement other than those accused or convicted of offences under Section 325 or of more serious offences against the person under the Indian Penal Code.

4. The ban on processions to continue. Malik Sir Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana, Premier of the Punjab has issued the following statement on the compromise with the Muslim League.

'The Punjab Government have been accused of restricting the political activities of their opponents, and of using the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance, 1946, in order to keep their opponents out of the way during the Budget Session.

'It has never been the intention of my colleagues and myself to restrict political activities to an extent not justified by the communal situation; and we are particularly anxious that the opposition should be given the fullest opportunity of taking part in the deliberations of the House in a week's time. Moreover, the announcement made by His Majesty's Government on 20 February, creates an entirely new situation, in which the leaders of all parties and communities must be in a position to confer with one another and to decide how the Punjab should face the future.

'Keeping in view these objects, and also our responsibility to members of all communities for the maintenance of public order, we have decided to go as far as we can to make it possible for the Opposition to resume constitutional methods.

'We cannot safely remove all measures which might be interpreted as restrictive. For example, we cannot relax the existing restrictions on military drill or on the carrying of arms. We have carefully considered permitting processions where they are now prohibited, and have come to the conclusion that for the present the prohibition must be maintained unless the District Magistrate considers it no longer necessary.

'But we decided to permit meetings in all places where they are now prohibited. It will be open to District Magistrates immediately or at any time to impose or reimpose restrictions on meetings whenever and wherever the public safety so demands. Persons who make speeches likely to inflame communal feelings will be proceeded against.

'The Punjab Public Safety Ordinance, 1946, was promulgated in view of the acute communal situation of last November, after the disturbances in Calcutta, Eastern Bengal, Bihar and the Western United Provinces, and during the disturbances in the Rohtak District of the Punjab. We intend at the Budget Session of the Assembly to consult party leaders, and to bring forward such legislation as may be considered necessary to preserve peace and public order, in place of the present Ordinance.

'We must remind the members of all communities that the main object of our policy since we took office has been to maintain communal peace. We trust that the leaders of all communities will impress upon their followers the need for restraint now that restrictions on meeting have been removed.'

31. Final Stage of League Agitation

Extract from a Letter from Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 28 February 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. III, pp. 365-72.

Secret
No. 651

Government House, Lahore

Dear Lord Wavell,

During the second half of February my main concern has again been the Muslim League agitation. I have kept Your Excellency informed by telegram of important developments, and

Abell has had copies of the notes I recorded on my interviews with Khwaja Nazim-ud-Din on 18th and 19th February....

4. The agitation was not nearly so successful as is represented by the Muslim League. Many districts gave practically no trouble, and serious trouble was confined to half a dozen districts, notably Gujarat, Lahore, Amritsar and Jullundur. The agitation was essentially communal—most of the rank and file believed that they were out to establish Muslim Raj, and I am told that they are disappointed at the somewhat meagre result achieved in view of their assumed objective. The fact that we had practically no communal trouble during the agitation was due primarily to the well-known tendency of communities not directly concerned in an attack on Government to refrain from interference. Secondary reasons for the absence of communal trouble were the restrictions imposed upon the Press, for which the Premier has been much criticized; the exemplary conduct of the Police; and the success of the Premier and Swaran Singh in restraining the Sikhs, who were and still are extremely uneasy. The Muslim League leaders did their best to avoid incidents, but their demonstrations were extraordinarily provocative, for example, non-Muslims did not relish boasts about the coming Muslim rule, and did not like having their cars forcibly decorated with Muslim League flags, and so on. The widespread belief of the Muslim demonstrators that Muslim Raj was round the corner has had a deplorable effect on communal feeling. I have referred above to the exemplary conduct of the Police. They were told to be as tolerant as possible, and it is very difficult to maintain morale when men are not permitted to retaliate in the face of continuous threats and provocation. But with very few exceptions the men stood up to the agitation admirably and never failed to obey orders or to follow their officers when drastic action was required....

6. The consequences of the agitation are closely linked with the reactions to the announcement of 20th February. I have already given Your Excellency a somewhat jejune account of some of these reactions, which I can now supplement. On 20th February, when I showed him the text of the announcement, Khizar remarked that it was 'the work of lunatics'. On 21st February he was in a more complacent mood, and said that he took it to be nothing more than 'a threat'. I said that if he thought that HMG did not intend to hand over power by 30th June 1948, he must revise his opinion—it would be most unsafe for him to act or plan on any assumption other than that HMG meant what they so clearly said. Khizar has since told me that the general reaction of ordinary people is complete incredulity, but his own final view is one of profound dismay.

The Sikhs, as I have already said, were greatly disturbed at the settlement with the Muslim League. Giani Kartar Singh saw Macdonald, the Home Secretary, on 26th February and said that the Sikhs were prepared for an alliance with the Muslims, but only on suitable terms. They did not want a partition of the Punjab except in the last resort, but they must have the right to demand partition. They would consent to a Cabinet composed entirely of Muslims and Sikhs, and would allow the Premier to be a Muslim, but in the Cabinet as a whole there must be parity between the Muslims and themselves. Any settlement of this kind would have to be guaranteed by HMG.

Giani Kartar Singh is not a very reliable person, and what may prove to be a more accurate forecast of the Sikh position was given me on 27th morning by Swaran Singh. He said that the announcement of 20th February had destroyed the foundations of everything and had removed the possibility of any effective sanctions to a settlement. The Sikhs had been profoundly moved by the obvious desire of the Muslims to seize the Punjab for themselves and would not permit

them to do so. The agitation had shown Pakistan in all its nakedness and was a fair example of the kind of treatment that the minorities, including the Sikhs, might expect from the Muslim extremists. He admitted that civil war would lead to widespread misery, but he did not see how the Sikhs could be partners with the Muslims on any terms in the absence of some effective sanction. He disliked the idea of partitioning the Punjab, but felt that a partition with all its disadvantages might prove to be the only remedy. I advised Swaran Singh to persuade the Sikhs not to commit themselves at present, and told him I was always ready to see Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh if they wanted to discuss the Sikh position with me.

A retired Army officer, whose sympathies are generally with the Muslim League, told me yesterday afternoon that the announcement of 20th February had shocked him and other old soldiers of the Rawalpindi Division. He thought it cowardly and base, and he and his like did not understand what had gone wrong with the British. I endeavoured to explain the situation to him, and pointed out that in all these years no organized party in India had said a word for the British officer or the British connection. It was not surprising therefore that the British people and HMG supposed that the vast majority of Indians wanted us to clear out as soon as possible.

7. The future is still most obscure. The Premier's plan is to get into touch with the Muslim League leaders—he has to do so in any case in connection with his proposed legislation—and to assist them in promoting a Muslim League–Sikh alliance. He believes that if the Sikhs could be brought into line, the Congress would not give very much difficulty. But the Muslim Leaguers are puffed up by popular adulation, and it is believed that they intend to go all out for a Muslim Ministry with no non-Muslim adherents, except for a few Scheduled Caste members whom they hope to be able to buy. Unlike the Sikhs, they are not free agents and cannot act as principals in any deal—so the important decisions will rest with Jinnah advised presumably by worthless creatures such as Ghazanfar Ali. Khizar has advised Mamdot through a mutual friend to refrain during the next few days from activities likely further to offend the Sikhs, but on past form this warning will probably not be heeded. I do not intend to intervene myself just yet, since until something happens to bring the Muslim Leaguers up against the bleakness of the communal outlook, I do not think they will see any reason at all. Khizar himself seems to have made up his mind to leave India for the summer starting some time in May; if he does so, the Coalition Ministry must disintegrate when he goes. It may fall before then, and the only Ministry which has any hope of keeping the Punjab stable until June 1948 is one representing all three communities, or at least the Muslims and the Sikhs. If the Muslim League succeed in forming a Ministry which is entirely Muslim except in name, they will be faced at once by an agitation far more serious than their own. I will of course report any significant developments—we may have to fall back on some partition of the Punjab before the final transfer of power takes place.

Yours sincerely,
E.M. JENKINS



32. Report from Punjab Province

Extract from the Punjab Fortnightly Report for the Second Half of February 1947, Home Poll (I), File No. 18/2/1947, NAI.

Confidential.

1. POLITICAL.

...The settlement has given to the Muslim League certain of its demands, but it has not emasculated the Ordinance nor has it done grievous damage to the control which Government considers most necessary in present circumstances. Since their release from jail, the League leaders have been active and League's Committee of Action has met.So far as is known no course of conduct has commended itself to the Committee of Action which would again and at an early date bring the Muslim League into conflict with the law. To this extent the situation can be described as being satisfactory.

Although many were shocked by the vulgarity of the League's tactics and behaviour, the agitation undoubtedly attracted the sympathy of most Muslims who are not nationalist in their political opinions, even while it failed to command the active support of the great majority of the Muslim middle classes. Nationalist Muslims largely ignored it, or made a pretence of doing so, while the Khaksars failed in their effort to exploit it to their own advantage and to the League's prejudice. Hindus of all classes and political views resented the disorder, as well as feared the portents it contained, and a volume of bitter complaint was voiced that stronger measures were not adopted in dealing with it. Congress Socialists ridiculed it and described it as a suburban circus performance staged by ex-knights, their wives, sons and nephews. Labour was afraid to join it lest its ranks were split by communalism. The Communists watched it with interest not unmixed with envy and felt constrained to condemn it publicly as a purely communal demonstration designed to win Pakistan at the expense of the other communities. They made it clear in what they said that they supported the demand of the League that the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance should be withdrawn, but, true to their creed, they declared that this must be done by means of a joint struggle on the part of the working classes of all communities. Of all reactions, however, the most marked, and the most dangerous, were those of the Sikhs. Their resentment was bitter and their feelings inflamed by their understanding of the League's objective and by incidents which involved Sikhs and furnished what they accepted as proof of Muslim mass animosity directed against the Sikh community. There is but little doubt that if the disorders had continued the Sikhs in some places would have made a determined effort to take matters into their own hands, and that an already bad situation would have been worsened by serious and wide-spread communal clashes....The Sikhs now have little faith in the settlement's permanency and are continuing to advance their plans for the formation of the Akal Fauj or Saina. In doing so, in public and in private, the Sikhs leaders are making no secret of the fact that this Sikh army is being formed to fight Muslim League aggression. Every Sikh knows its purpose and when enlisted is required to take a pledge that he is prepared to sacrifice his life and everything else he possesses for the freedom of the Sikh Panth.

The turmoil which existed in the province did not prevent the greatest interest being taken in His Majesty's Government's statement which was made public on the 20th of February. The reception given to the statement by both Muslims and Hindus was immediately favourable, and, in the case of the former, the statement has continued to be held in esteem because it is

accepted that the Muslim position in the Interim Government is not assailed, that the Constituent Assembly no longer constitutes the menace it was in Muslim eyes, and because the chances of Pakistan becoming reality are thought to have greatly improved. Hindu feelings appear to be in the process of change, and the cordiality of their earlier estimation seems to have been diminished by more mature consideration. Many of them are now gravely concerned by what they describe as the statement's ambiguities and by the lack of an understanding which is satisfactory to them of the statement's implications and of the British Government's intentions. The Sikh attitude to the statement has been consistently hostile and the Sikh leaders have been quick in voicing both condemnation of and accusation against Britain, the former on the score of broken promises and the latter on the grounds of the allegation that it is the British purpose to create communal strife. The British statement has added emphasis to the Sikh demand for a separate State, or, at least, a Sikh province inside the Punjab. This is evident in a draft which the SA Dal has recently prepared in which the fundamental demands of the Sikhs are set forth as well as suggestions for the future constitution of India and a declaration of Sikh objectives. The draft which has been circulated to elicit opinions does not rule out the possibility of a United Punjab but makes it clear beyond dispute that the Muslims would have to pay a heavy price for an amalgam of this kind. When the draft has taken its final shape it is the intention to submit it to the Minorities Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly. It is of interest that while this matter was under consideration in the SA Dal the opinion was expressed that as the Punjab had originally been taken by the British from the Sikhs the latter had legal title to demand it back. According to the Press, legal advice is being sought in this connection and resort to law is contemplated if the advice received is favourable to the Sikh case. It is clear from what has been written in this report that the Punjab's future is not to be devoid of interest nor divorced from much anxiety....

3. VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS.

Since the order declaring the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh and the Muslim League National Guards to be unlawful under the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act was passed on the 24th of January, and subsequently withdrawn, activities of the Sangh and the Guards have increased. The former has resumed briskness in a manner which is not blatant and which was normal to it from November when the Public Safety Ordinance came into force until the time of declaration to be unlawful. The activity is persistent nevertheless and deliberately calculated to keep Hindu morale alive. The latter have been taking an increasing public part in Muslim League affairs and the improvement of their efficiency and strength was a subject of consideration when the Muslim League Committee met in session immediately after the League leaders were released from jail. In the circumstances which now obtain it is almost a foregone conclusion that the strength of these two organizations will increase and with it their potentialities for mischief. Along with them, and possibly outpacing them, the Sikh Akal Saina will increase in size with equal, if not greater, menace to the tranquillity of the Province....

33. 'Rousing Reception for Released Muslim Women Leaders'

1 March 1947

Report from *Pakistan Times* cited in *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 310.

A tumultuous reception was accorded to Begum Shah Nawaz, MLA, Begum Tasadduque Hussain, MLA, Begum Fatima, Miss Zainab Siddiqui and other women released from jail, at

a big public meeting of Muslim women in the Circular Gardens outside Town Hall, Lahore on Thursday.

Begum Shah Nawaz, in the course of a forceful speech, reiterated the determination to 'fight shoulder to shoulder with our men for a just and democratic settlement of the Indian problem'. She said the month-old League movement in the Punjab had proved that Muslim women were capable of facing all kinds of ordeals for the sake of their cherished ideals.

She paid a warm tribute to the purdah-women who cheerfully faced *lathi*-charges and tear-gas operations. She condemned the 'brutal and unprovoked' police firing on a mixed procession in Ambala in which two women were killed besides a large number of men. She called upon the Punjab Government to institute an independent and judicial inquiry into the conduct of those who ordered the police to open fire on a peaceful procession.

Begum Tasadduque Hussain and Begum Fatima also spoke.

34. League's Role in Punjab Premier's Resignation

Letter from Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad to M.A. Jinnah, 2 March 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 164–5.

ON BOARD THE KARACHI MAIL

Dear Mr M.A. Jinnah,

Assalaamo 'Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu.

As I told you when we met at Delhi, it has been my impression all along that at the proper time Sir Khizar Hayat Khan could be persuaded to join the League. But unfortunately certain events spoiled this scheme of mine for some time. Now, however, on HMG's new declaration, Sir M. Zafrullah Khan approached Sir Khizar suggesting that at this critical juncture he should not fail his community. Malik Sahib then asked Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan to come to Lahore. As I also, on my way to Sind, had to stay there for one night, Sir Muhammad came there yesterday and discussed the matter with me. Following this, last night, he had a long discourse with Malik Sahib and Qizilbash. They have agreed to resign. Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan has shown me Malik Sahib's declaration which will be published tonight or tomorrow after he has seen His Excellency the Governor. I pray that no hitch occurs.

Now you have a great lever to get Muslim rights from your opponents. Now only the NWFP remains. I will try to study its situation. I hope you will get help from some other sources as well, but no more can be disclosed in a letter. Maybe we meet at Delhi in April.

Yours sincerely,

MIRZA B. MAHMUD AHMAD

Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement

PS. My address during the time I am in Sind will be Nasirabad, Kinjijhee (J), Tharparkar District, Sind.

35. 'Punjab League Movement—Its Character and Possibilities'

Extracts from an Editorial in *People's Age*, 2 March 1947.

It is exactly one month since the Punjab Muslim League launched its satyagraha against the Public Safety Ordinance.

Despite the efforts of the official communiqués to play down the sweep and extent of the movement, it is quite clear even from the communiqués themselves, that far from succeeding in throttling the League, repression has only acted as an incentive to the League masses to increase the tempo of their struggle.

The courageous manner in which the League masses—men and women—have resisted repression, the way they have faced bullets, lathi charges and tear-gas, picketed law courts and jails—the militant anti-imperialism with which they have burnt Union Jacks—have, despite all political differences, won the admiration of Congressmen and other non-League fighters for freedom.

If Only

....The Chronicler, columnist of the nationalist Sunday Chronicle, an avowed opponent of the League, voices this sentiment in his latest dispatch from Lahore:

‘Today, at least in one Province the League HAS been forced by the logic of circumstances to oppose and agitate against the bureaucracy in a manner taught by the Congress....

‘I believe that if honest hearts and intelligent minds are applied to it, this situation can be moulded into a pattern of unity.’

Transformation?

A similar hope, it seems, dominates the minds of the progressive rank and file of the Muslim League in the Punjab and they feel it may be possible to ‘transform’ the present League movement into a united Hindu–Muslim–Sikh movement against the Ordinance and Police Raj.

In their well-justified enthusiasm at the colossal sweep of the League movement and, above all, at the successful prevention of the movement being converted into communal riots, despite the worst efforts of the CID, the League progressives forget both the all-India and the Provincial context in which the anti-Ordinance struggle is being fought. They forget:

- That the All-India League leadership supported the Punjab struggle in the beginning not because of any fervent desire for civil liberties (which it itself has suppressed equally ruthlessly in Bengal), but as a means of exerting pressure on the Congress to get the most reactionary parts of the British Plan—grouping and other things—implemented.
- That today, after the Attlee statement, and its machiavellian ‘offer’ to ‘transfer power’ to the provincial governments ‘existing’. In June 1948 the League leadership sees in the Punjab movement a battle for the Ministry and consequently for Pakistan itself. The fact that a day after the Attlee Award the League started a similar movement in the Frontier against the Congress Ministry highlights this new character which the League leadership will strive to give to the Punjab movement.
- That for exactly the same reasons, after the Attlee Award, the Congress leadership will oppose the Punjab movement through thick and thin in order to keep the Ministry out of League hands and thus keep the Province out of Pakistan.

It is for these reasons that the hopes of ‘transforming’ the movement are false hopes, based on wishful thinking and blindness to the political realities of today.

Partisan, Factional

Already the special care which used to be taken keep the movement strictly non-communal, strictly for civil liberties, in order to win support of the Hindu and Sikh masses, seems to have

been abandoned even by the progressives inside the League, in their flush of excitement at the seeming success with which they are meeting.

- The Pakistan and anti-Ministry slogans—which do nothing but alienate the non-League masses—are again dominant.
- With the burning of the Union Jack, which of course wins the sympathy of the patriotic Hindus and Sikhs, there is also the hoisting of the League flags on public buildings, which rouses the suspicion and the opposition of the non-Leaguers.
- The campaign for the release of ALL political prisoners has once again been reduced to a demand for the release merely of Leaguers—thus failing to win the support of Congressmen, who could be roused if the demand for the release of all victims of Police Raj were raised.

Bureaucracy's Plan

This growing partisan twist which the movement has taken has given renewed opportunity to the bureaucracy to carry out its plan to make the Punjab a riot-arena.

The opportunist and chauvinist leadership of the Akali Party—at the instance of loyalists like Baldev Singh—has come out with the threat of a counter movement against the League. Reports are appearing of an Akali Fauj being recruited, marching, shouting anti-League slogans.

There is no doubt that this will bring the riot-danger nearer than ever and enable the more rabid communal elements to come to the top on both sides.

Negotiations

...But from what has appeared in the press and from the speeches by League leaders, it is clear that the main strategy of the League leadership—both the all-India leadership as represented by Nazimuddin, and the provincial, as represented by men like Firoz Khan Noon and Mamdot—is being directed to win over the loyalist Khizar and his group of 13 toadies in order to tip the balance in favour of the League and thus form a League Ministry....

No Formula Yet

...The Attlee statement makes the Punjab Ministry a key deciding factor in the battle for and against Pakistan. And the struggle in the Punjab will surely degenerate more and more into a sordid and factional ... for Ministry through the favour of Jenkins and his sepoys—with riots thrown in it the bureaucracy can manage to provoke them.

Aimed at Upsurge

A heavy responsibility, therefore, rests today on the Communist Party, on the organized working class, kisan and student movements.

The bureaucracy and the vested interests are determined to crush the rapidly growing tenant movement against feudal extortion (which will reach a new peak with the harvesting of the wheat crop in April) and the fast increasing organized might of the working—class, led by the railway workers.

The Ordinance Raj is primarily directed against this mass upsurge of the tenants and the workers which has changed the face of the once dark 'loyal' Punjab.

Equally also is the conspiracy to create communal riot in the Punjab directed against this upsurge, in order to divide and disrupt it.

The Communist Party and the organized working-class, kisan and student movements must, therefore, step up their own independent united Hindu-Muslim-Sikh campaign against Ordinance Raj and against the bureaucracy's plans to drown the upsurge in civil war....

36. 'Punjab Premier Resigns: Dramatic Developments at Lahore'

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 3 March 1947.

LAHORE, 2 March.—The Punjab Premier, Sir Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana, resigned Premiership at 10 o'clock tonight. The resignation was submitted by him following almost two hours talks with his colleagues at his Cantonment house where earlier a meeting of the Coalition Party was held this afternoon for about two hours where he talked with the members of the Coalition Party which he led for almost one year having become Coalitions Party's leader almost this time last year....

Malik Sir Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana, in a statement late to-night, said: 'In the course of my statement issued on the 26th February, I said that His Majesty's Government's announcement of 20th February, had created an entirely new situation in which the leaders of all parties in the Punjab must decide how the province should face the future. I have since given most anxious consideration to the situation with which the country is now faced and, after mature deliberation, have arrived at certain conclusions which I take this opportunity of making public.

Last year when on the invitation of His Excellency the Governor I took upon myself the responsibility of forming a Coalition Government I was convinced that the best interests of the province and of all parties would be served by the administration being run by a non-communal party or coalition.

As regards the constitutional evolution of the country, each party in the coalition was left free to pursue its own line. On my part I made it clear that my Muslim colleagues in the Legislature and myself fully supported the Muslim demands. I am as thoroughly convinced to-day as I was then that for the purpose of securing a sound provincial administration the best arrangement is a non-communal party or coalition. The risks attendant upon the adoption of any other course are too obvious to be stressed.

On this basis, I have endeavoured to maintain a distinction between the provincial and administrative problems and those that were central and constitutional. So long as this line could be maintained, I had hoped that the coalition, in addition to running the provincial administration on a satisfactory basis, might also serve as a bridge to make a communal settlement possible. Arrangement in the Punjab might have served as an example elsewhere.

It must, however, be confessed with sorrow that the gulf that, unfortunately, divides the communities is as wide to-day as it was last year. It might, nevertheless, have been possible for the coalition to continue to bridge it and to function satisfactorily on the basis on which it was formed, but HMG's latest pronouncement has obliterated the boundaries between the provincial and central spheres and constitutional and administrative problems and has thereby destroyed that very basis itself.

HMG have declared their solemn resolve to start immediately the process of transferring the balance of political power into Indian hands and to complete it by June, 1948. To meet the contingency of HMG finding it necessary in the case of the Punjab to transfer responsibility to a provincial administration, it is only fair that all political parties in the province should have a chance of evolving between them an administration which should be ready to receive sovereign power from HMG as soon as the process of transfer commences.

If I were now to continue to lead a coalition in which the Muslim League is not represented, this might put in serious jeopardy such chances as might otherwise exist of a settlement being arrived at between the communities in the province.

The basic fact in the situation is that the province has been suddenly confronted with the main constitutional problem and, in conformity with the policy to which I have throughout adhered, the responsibility for dealing with this problem on behalf of the Muslims must continue to vest in the Muslim majority party.

HMG's announcement has made it imperative that parties in the province must be brought face to face with stark realities and must come to grips direct with the problems that confront the country. It is now incumbent on me to leave the field clear for the Muslim League to come to such arrangement vis-à-vis the other parties as it might consider best in the interests of the Muslims and the province.

I have, therefore, submitted to His Excellency the Governor the resignation of my Government. It is needless to add that I and my Muslim colleagues will continue to support the Muslim demand for self-determination. In view of the step that I have taken, it is needless for me to stress that I shall be ever ready to promote the cause of communal harmony and the chances of communal settlement in the province as far as it might be within my power, and shall not grudge any sacrifice that might help to achieve this much-to-be-desired consummation...'. .

37. Nomination for the Premiership of Punjab

Extracts from a Letter from Central Government Servants of Punjab to M.A. Jinnah,
3 March 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 168–70.

NEW DELHI

Most Respected Quaid-i-Azam,

We apologise for diverting your attention to the following few points in the midst of your multifarious activities and hope that you will give a very careful consideration to the points raised therein and guide the destiny of the Punjab in this critical and momentous hour.

2. Nobody knows better than your good self that the coming years are very critical and full of potentialities from the point of view of the Muslims. Your sound and wise leadership has so far piloted us safely through most critical hours [*sic*]. It is a recognized fact that the Punjab is the cornerstone of Pakistan. The sacrifices and fortitude exhibited by the Muslims of the Punjab have forced the dummy Ministry of the Punjab to resign. This altered position places the Muslim League in the forefront to form a Ministry. It is, therefore, categorically imperative that a man possessing personality, vast experience and administrative and tactical ability should be at the helm of affairs in the Punjab. We mean to say that the leadership of the Punjab Muslims should vest in a person who should be able to guide and control the Punjab flawlessly in the difficult times ahead, should such an eventuality arise in 1948 in view of HMG's announcement of the White Paper. Permit us to suggest humbly that Malik Firoz Khan Noon is the right type of man for the Premiership of the Punjab. He bears all the qualities mentioned before. It was his initiative and guidance during the recent Civil Disobedience Movement against the Ministry that has crowned the League with success. The common argument against him that he was an Executive Councillor of the Viceroy and is, therefore, not expected to look after the interests of the Muslims has been completely washed off by his recent sacrifices [and his] going to jail

for the sake of the community and Islam. This spirit of Malik Firoz Khan Noon has actuated the masses to think differently and now they are thinking highly of him....

3. You are already aware of this fact that the Nawab of Mamdot is a good table-talker but he lacks all the qualities required of a leader. He cannot deliver a public speech, cannot control a gathering, possesses no initiative of his own and is, therefore, not fit for the premiership. He is a puppet in the hands of Mian Mumtaz Daultana and Raja Ghazanfar Ali who believe in intrigues and cliques. It has been the utmost endeavour of Raja Ghazanfar Ali and Mian Mumtaz Daultana not to give prominence to the noteworthy activities of Malik Firoz Khan Noon, for they fear that their own leadership will be jeopardised otherwise. This is a hard fact. It will be admitted that the presence of Malik Firoz Khan Noon in the Punjab and his selfless services to the community have infused a new life in the Muslims of the Punjab....

The Muslim Press in the Punjab has frequently voiced the public opinion for a change in the Punjab leadership. The people desire it and we request you not to ignore the public demand. It will be difficult, rather impossible, to amend the mistake done at this critical juncture as regards this matter. A split in the League seems imminent if the MLAs are not allowed to exercise a free vote for the election of their leader. Malik Firoz Khan Noon's election can avoid that impending catastrophe. He knows the art of cementing people together and overcoming difficult crises.

In the end we request you to personally guide the deliberations of the Punjab at this crucial stage in forming the Ministry because upon this Ministry will rest the strength of the Muslims of the Punjab at present and during the coming year. We have implicit faith in your leadership. We earnestly hope that you will fly to Lahore to judge the matters for yourself and give guidance as you consider right and wise.

We also venture to suggest that the following should be the Ministers of the Punjab:

1. Malik Firoz Khan Noon, Premier
2. Shaukat Hayat Khan
3. Mian Noorullah
4. Begum Shah Nawaz
5. One Scheduled Caste
6. A representative each of the Hindu and Sikh communities in case a Coalition Ministry is formed.

Apologising for this tiresome narrative,

We are, Respected Quaid-i-Azam,
YOUR HUMBLE FOLLOWERS FROM THE PUNJAB
(in the Government of India)

38. 'Record Lahore Crowds Celebrate League's Victory Day: Scheduled Caste Sikh Leaders Pledge to Fight for Pakistan'

4 March 1947

Extracts from a Report from *Pakistan Times* cited in *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 319–20.

Sardar Hari Singh Nirbhay, a Scheduled Caste Sikh leader, and Chaudhury Sukh Lal, Deputy Mayor of Lahore, were among those who addressed an unprecedentedly large public meeting

outside Mochi Gate, Lahore, on Sunday, in celebration of the Muslim League Victory Day. The Khan of Mamdot presided.

Sardar Hari Singh, amidst shouts of *Allah-o-Akbar*, *Sat Sri Akal*, declared that 20 lakh of *Mazhabi* Sikhs would fight shoulder to shoulder with the Muslims for the attainment of Pakistan.

Chaudhury Sukh Lal said that *Akhand Hindustan* would prove a graveyard of the minorities, particularly the Untouchables. He assured the League leaders of every support in their struggle for the attainment of Pakistan....

Mr Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Health Member, Government of India, said that the Punjab Muslims were now wide awake, disciplined and ready for action. As far as the Muslims were concerned, they would like the British to quit in June 1947 rather than in June 1948.

Malik Firoz Khan Noon said that the present League struggle had conclusively proved what the Muslims could do if faced with a national crisis. It would be impossible for anybody in the world to force a constitution on the Muslims against their will. He paid a warm tribute to the Muslim women of the Punjab for the heroic struggle which they waged, side by side with their menfolk.

Begum Shah Nawaz declared that the minorities in the Punjab need have no fear of the Muslims.

She said: 'Our history, our religion and our traditions are the surest guarantee for the protection of the cultural, religious and political rights of the minorities.'...

Lahore City wore a gala appearance on Sunday when Muslim localities, bazaars and educational institutions were decorated. Muslim League flags fluttered on every shop and house-top. Every lane and by-lane was beautifully decorated with green flags and arches were erected at important centres.

Over 200,000 enthusiastic spectators filled the spacious *maidan* at Mochi Gate, and overflowed into the lanes, hundreds of them crowding on the balconies and terraces of surrounding buildings....

In the evening Muslim houses, shops and institutions were brilliantly illuminated in honour of the Muslim League Victory Day.

39. 'Let Us Rise Above Petty Differences and March Forward, Urges Jinnah'

Dawn, 4 March 1947.

BOMBAY, Monday.—Mr M.A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League, in an interview to the Press on the resignation of the Punjab Ministry, appeals for complete unity amongst Musalmans.

'If we establish complete unity, co-operation and harmony, among ourselves, it will not be difficult', Mr Jinnah adds, 'to settle with other communities or parties and the British Government'.

The following is the full text of the statement of Mr Jinnah.

'I am glad to learn the news this morning that Malik Sir Khizr Hyat Khan has submitted the resignation of his Cabinet. He has taken a wise decision and I hope that his example will soon be followed by Dr Khan Sahib.

‘At this critical moment and in view of the grave situation that the Muslim Nation is facing, it is absolutely essential that there should be complete unity amongst us. There is no power on earth that can stop us from achieving our goal of Pakistan provided Musalmans stand solidly behind the Muslim League.

Secure Posterity’s Admiration

‘If we fail, it will be our own fault, and let us not be condemned by history and posterity that we of this generation were not able to rise above petty differences and personal equations or quarrels at a moment when it is obvious that we should close up our ranks for our national cause and for our cherished goal of Pakistan.

‘We have to struggle against all odds and we are handicapped in many ways, but let us not be held guilty of having lost our cause owing to our own folly of creating differences amongst ourselves and allowing them to exist. Let us be absolutely united; speak and act with one voice, and if we establish complete unity, co-operation and harmony among ourselves, it will not be difficult to settle with other communities or parties and the British Government.

‘I therefore once more appeal to every Musalman to unreservedly rally round the banner of the Muslim League and let us march together as true soldiers of our nation and then we shall not fail.’—API

40. ‘No Domination by Religious Majority: United Front by All Minorities’

Extracts from a Report from *The Tribune*, 4 March 1947.

LAHORE, 3 March.—The formation of a united front by all the Parties in the Punjab excepting the Muslim League against any political domination by a religious majority and the establishment of Pakistan was made known to-night at a mammoth public meeting organized by the Lahore District Congress Committee at Kapurthala Grounds....

It was announced, as a unanimous decision, to appeal to all the non-League sections of the populace to observe complete general *hartal* on 11 March all over the province and to hold public meetings on that day to express their resolve not to accept any domination by a majority party formed on religious basis or the establishment of Pakistan.

Several speakers including Ch Krishan Gopal Dutt, Master Kabul Singh and Sardar Pratap Singh, MLAs, accused the Punjab Governor of having helped the Muslim League against the Coalition Party. They alleged ‘intrigue’ on the part of officials also who had by their attitude, created an adverse atmosphere in the province wherein the forces of lawlessness let loose by the Muslim League were encouraged....

The main theme of the speeches made was that the non-League population of the province would not tolerate the formation of the Muslim League ministry and, therefore, could not agree to any domination of a religious majority and the establishment of Pakistan....

It was also made clear by almost every speaker that the movement was not at all designed against the Muslims.... Their protest was against the League ideology and therefore, people were asked to remember that they should not do anything which would in any manner, injure the feeling of any Mussalman....

Master Tara Singh, who was the first speaker, said that a grave situation had arisen in the Punjab and it was, therefore, the duty of all the non-League sections, including the Nationalist

Muslims, to stand united. They should, in no case, tolerate any communal domination in the Punjab. The Punjab must remain a free and independent province wherein every one should enjoy full and equal rights....

Dr Gopi Chand was sorry to say that the word civil liberties had been exploited. All that had been done to overthrow the Coalition Ministry and overawe the Punjab Premier. He said that a struggle would be carried both inside and outside the Assembly for the opposition of a religious majority's rule over others. Even direct action may have to be resorted to but everything would be done peacefully....

Gyani Kartar Singh described the struggle which they had started today as a 'crusade' for their freedom. He maintained that the Sikhs would suffer more because all their interests were so closely connected with the Punjab where 95 per cent of Sikhs resided. He stated that even though by June, 1948 India would be free, the battle of their freedom in the Punjab would begin. He had no doubt that everyone will stand together....

41. Resignation of Ministry Results in Communal Rioting

Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Pethick-Lawrence, 4 March 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, p. 55.

Immediate

Confidential

No. 26-G

Punjab Situation. Yesterday 3rd March, Muslims in Lahore were jubilant and noisy. Non-Muslims especially Sikhs were correspondingly exasperated and at night very large non-Muslim meeting was held at which violent speeches were made by Congress and Sikh leaders.

2. Today, 4th March, there has been much communal tension. During the morning Student procession mostly Hindu clashed with Police and later raided Police office damaging property and injuring about 30 Policemen of whom two have since died. Police opened fire and three demonstrators are reported to have gunshot wounds. This afternoon communal rioting has broken out in Lahore City. So far six members of public reported dead and 59 treated in hospital of whom 20 injured seriously. Police are still engaged and I have no complete report. Troops are standing by.

3. Congress and Sikhs are determined to resist Muslim rule. Mamdot has made no progress in forming Coalition and now wants Muslim Ministry supported by a handful of Scheduled Caste and Indian Christians. Situation is grave and without Coalition communal trouble on a large scale seems inevitable. I have told Mamdot that he must convince me of firm Parliamentary majority before I consider putting him in and that his Muslim government would be so short-lived that it might be impossible to put him in at all. Alternative is Section 93 which would not be satisfactory but might possibly be preferred by Punjabis generally.

Repeated to Viceroy.



42. Negotiations Related to Formation of the Muslim League Ministry

Letter from Iftikhar Husain Khan of Mamdot to Evan Jenkins, 5 March 1947

IOR, R/3/1/176, Acc No. 3477, NAI.

MAMDOT VILLA, DAVIES ROAD, LAHORE

Dear Sir Evan,

During my interview with your Excellency on the evening of 4th March, I submitted that, in view of the disturbances which had occurred in Lahore, I wished the new Ministry to assume office and responsibility at once, even though my negotiations with the Panthic Akali Party had not yet concluded. I further explained that the Council of Ministers to be formed immediately would be expanded in due course in the light of these or other negotiations; but that the Ministry as initially proposed was by itself in a position to command a majority of the Legislature.

Your Excellency desired further assurance on this last point and expressed the view that you would not like to take the risk of handing over the administration to a Ministry which might not stay in office for more than a very short period.

During my interview with your Excellency today, your Excellency informed me that, the Care-Taker Ministry having quitted office last night, the problem of substituting a new authority—either a new Ministry or the Governor acting under section 93 of the Government of India Act—had become urgent. Your Excellency further suggested that the best course would be for your Excellency to assume the necessary powers of administration under section 93 to fill the vacuum at once and for such period as I might require in order to form a Ministry commanding a stable majority.

I submitted, and I wish to repeat the submission, that the Ministry, the appointment of which I am recommending, was already in a position to face the legislature successfully and should be given an opportunity of proving it on the floor of the House.

Your Excellency having formally summoned me to assist in the formation of a Council of Ministers, the stage of inquiry whether the Ministry, the formation of which I am advising, is likely to command a majority of the House, is really over. The likelihood, presumed by your Excellency when summoning me, can now be contradicted only by an adverse vote of the House.

I have no reason to doubt the assurances of support which I have received from various groups of MLAs outside the Muslim League Party and I have no manner of doubt that the Ministry which I am proposing will be able to command a majority [*sic*] of at least 90 to begin with. This number comprises the Muslim League Party of 80 plus 3 other Muslim members, 4 members of the Scheduled Castes, 1 European and 2 Indian Christians. This number is most likely to go up to about 100 before the Legislature resumes its session.

I submit that, while opinions and conjectures may differ about the likely amount of support for the proposed Ministry, the only course fair to me at this stage is to put them to actual test. As for the risk (which to [my] mind does not exist) that the Ministry may fall as soon as it faces the Assembly, I submit that, in theory, such a risk is involved in the formation of any Ministry at any time. Normal constitutional procedure should not, however, be deviated from because of the presence of a theoretical risk of this nature.

In view of these observations, I trust your Excellency will permit me to submit immediately for your approval the names of Ministers for the new Cabinet.

Yours sincerely,
IFTIKHAR HUSAIN KHAN

43. Support to the Proposed League Ministry Must Be Established

Letter from Evan Jenkins to Iftikhar Husain Khan of Mamdot, 5 March 1947
IOR, R/3/1/176, Acc No. 3477, NAI.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, LAHORE

My dear Khan Sahib,

Thank you for your letter of 5th March 1947. Since our interview today, very serious communal rioting has broken out in Multan, and the situation in Lahore has deteriorated greatly. Rioting is also reported in Amritsar. In these very grave conditions you suggest that I accept your very general assurance that you command a majority in the Assembly and ask you to instal a new Ministry forthwith. I asked you at one of our earlier interviews to let me have the names of your supporters, and today I added that in the case of those who are not members of your own party I should be glad to have a statement signed by them to the effect that they are prepared to support your Government in the House on all questions of confidence. I still think that these stipulations are reasonable, and shall be grateful if you will be good enough to comply with them. In the meantime I cannot continue indefinitely without a Ministry, and to fill the gap I have, with the concurrence of the Governor-General, made a proclamation under section 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935. I need hardly say that I consider the early establishment of a stable Ministry in the Punjab most important, and I hope that within the next few days you will be able to let me have proposals much more definite than those contained in your letter. I can assure you that the risks involved in any hasty action are anything but theoretical—they are as grave as could well be imagined.

2. My personal belief is that no Government which does not command the confidence of Punjabis generally can solve our present problems, and it is for you to consider whether in the additional time now available you should not resume negotiations with the other communities. May I also suggest that at the present juncture a statement by yourself and the leaders of the Hindus and Sikhs condemning the present communal outbreak would have an excellent effect? I have reason to believe that a move on your part for the issue of such a statement would be well received.

Yours sincerely,
E.M. JENKINS

44. Muslim Women of Delhi Support Punjab League Leaders

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 5 March 1947.

Over three thousand Muslim women of Delhi assembled in Anglo-Arabic College under the auspices of Delhi Women's Muslim League to congratulate the Punjab Muslim League leaders for successfully completing the civil disobedience movement on Tuesday. Begum Viqar-un-Nisa Noon presided over the meeting.

Jubilant shouts of 'Muslim League Zindabad' and 'Pakistan Hamara Haq Hai', charged with solemnity and enthusiasm received Begum Viqar-un-Nisa Noon and Dr Shaista Akhtar Suhrawardy.

The Muslim national life seemed to be taking a new turn when Muslim women both old and young restlessly listened to the account of the heroic struggle of the Punjab Muslim given by Begum Noon in her Presidential address.

'The present political economy of India admits of large differences between the poor and the rich,' Begum Noon said 'progress, wealth and education have been monopolized by certain sections of our society while a large number of people were steeped in illiteracy. To abolish this difference will be the main objects of Pakistan State.'

Begum Noon also pointed out that today Musalmans in every corner of the country were struggling unitedly for the right of self-determination.

They wanted to achieve Pakistan not for exploiting the minorities but to have a democratic regime which could afford equal opportunities of progress and prosperity to all.

APPEAL FOR UNITY

Begum Viqar-un-Nisa in the course of her Presidential address laid special stress on discipline and unity not only among Muslim menfolk, but also among Muslim women. She appealed to the Musalmans in general and the Muslim women in particular, to work like soldiers in an army for the final achievement of Pakistan.

Dr Shaista Akhtar Suhrawardy who spoke after Begum Noon declared that the success of the Punjab movement had proved that no Government could work successfully against the wishes of the majority.

'To oppose a Government imposed against the wishes of the people is by no means unlawful,' Dr Shaista continued....

She further remarked that the coming months would be most crucial for the Musalmans of India and the fact that the British Government had declared to leave India by June 1948, did not mean that the liberty had been won.

Muslims had a hard and bitter struggle ahead before it could be achieved, she added....

The martyrs of Bihar and victors of Punjab have proved that the Musalmans cannot be ruled unjustifiably.

She concluded her speech with an appeal to all the Musalmans to forget their differences and to unite for Pakistan, liberty and freedom which she thought could be the only reward for the sincere efforts of a Muslim.

45. "Care-Taker" Govt Resigns: Congress & Sikh Ministers' Protest'

The Tribune, 5 March 1947.

LAHORE, 4 March—The news regarding Ministry-making in the Punjab paled into insignificance in view of the serious developments which took place in the city to-day.

The non-Muslim League sections seemed to have no interest in what was happening at Government House or at the Mamdot Villa. Of course Khan Iftikhar Hussain, President of the Muslim League Assembly Party met His Excellency Sir Evan Jenkins and while skulls were being broken with police lathis and bayonets were being aimed at anti-communal Ministry demonstrators talks were going on at Government House regarding the installation of the Muslim League Ministry in office.

Nothing has resulted from these talks though the League is making every effort to get into office as early as it can. They don't want to lose any time.

But even though the Coalition may not have a majority to-day in view of the Muslim Unionists' attitude yet the Muslim League is still without even a bare majority. Their strength is just 80 to-day including that interesting Unionist MLA who has changed side only yesterday, in a House of 174—one seat is vacant. Bargaining is going on for two more and it is not unlikely that the two Indian Christians D.B.S.P. Singha and Mr Fazal Elahi may go over. There was a demonstration to-day against Dewan Bahadur Singha. The League has, however, not been able to 'allure' anyone else though efforts are being continued. If the ten Unionists remain neutral in the task of Ministry-making the League does not get a majority to form a ministry.

Dewan Bahadur Singha's attitude is already the subject of criticism among independent Christians who feel that their future is linked up with the minorities and an office to one of them cannot help the whole community.

R.B. Ganga Saran, who was one of the Independents and had joined D.B. Singha's group of Independents, which was re-organized on the day the Assembly met, has announced his definite decision not to join the Muslim League Ministry in any form. He has said that he can never join any communal party because he claims he has been returned by joint electorate.

The refusal to shoulder the responsibility of the administration of the province as members of the care-taker Government under the circumstances by the three Congress and Sikh Ministers which news was followed by the resignation by the Premier at midnight and his intimation to the Governor immediately after that the resignation of his Cabinet be considered to be accepted forthwith has created yet another situation in the province.

This means that either the Governor will promulgate Section 93 in the province on Wednesday (today) for running the administration of the province for which responsibility is entirely his now or a Ministry formed by the Muslim League alone (with perhaps one Christian sparrow who will then any way make the League summer) will be announced and installed in office immediately.

In view of this situation arising overnight again and with the capital of the province in the grip of communal frenzy Wednesday's developments would be watched with even keener interest.

46. 'Governor Takes Over Administration: Punjab Assembly Prorogued'

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 6 March 1947.

LAHORE, 5 March—Following communiqué has been issued from Government House at 6-45 p.m:

Malik Sir Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana and his colleagues of the Coalition Ministry saw the Governor last night, and informed him that the resignation of the Ministry must take effect forthwith.

Since no alternative Ministry has been formed, the Governor has been obliged to prorogue the Punjab Legislative Assembly, and to issue a proclamation under Section 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935.

His Excellency the Governor of the Punjab has issued the following statement:

The decision of the Coalition Ministry to leave office forthwith; the prorogation of the Punjab Legislative Assembly and the issue of a proclamation under Section 93 of the government

of India Act, 1935, have been formally announced. It may help the public to understand the situation if I explain it less formally.

Constitutionally, no government can be without a Government for any appreciable time. When a ministry resigns, the normal course is for its members to remain in office until their successors are ready to take over from them. On this occasion the Coalition Ministers, for reasons which they have made public, have decided not to remain in office. The gap caused by their departure must be filled and the only possible method of filling it immediately is by a proclamation under Section 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935 which transfers all responsibility to the Governor.

This is the first proclamation of the kind ever made in the Punjab and I hope that it will not have to remain in force for very long.

While attempts to form an alternative Ministry continue, my first task must be to restore and maintain order in Lahore and elsewhere and to prevent further disorder. Communal rioting causes nothing but misery and does not advance the interests of any community or of the Punjab.

Severe restrictions on meetings, processions and gatherings will be needed in Lahore for some days. These restrictions are essential, if order is to be maintained, and I trust that the leaders of all communities will co-operate with the authorities in enforcing them....

47. Negotiations on Ministry Formation

Extracts from a Letter from Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 7 March 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 878–84.

SECRET

NO. 653.

Many thanks for Your Excellency's letter No. 90/13 of 6th March. Yesterday there were some signs that the communities might be prepared to take a more reasonable line. Firoz, when he saw me in the morning, was strongly in favour of a coalition of some kind and said that he personally was prepared to make concessions to the Sikhs. He had not consulted Mamdot and is, as Your Excellency knows, unreliable and disloyal to his colleagues. After I had seen Firoz, I saw a non-Muslim deputation which included Sardar Ujjal Singh and Giani Kartar Singh. Sardar Ujjal Singh suggested that I should mediate and asked me to put in writing my general views about a settlement. He agreed with me that civil war and partition were both unthinkable, and that we should go in for a united Punjab under some Government acceptable to a large proportion of Punjabis. In the evening a Peace Committee consisting of Mamdot, Firoz, Daultana, Iftikhar-ud-Din, Shaukat, Tara Singh, Sachar, Singha (the Speaker), Gopi Chand Bargava (one of the Lahore Congress Leaders), Swaran Singh and Gibbon (the Anglo-Indian MLA) was formed. I am not sure that Tara Singh really joined this Committee, as I understand he was in Amritsar yesterday and is still there. But the fact that many of the persons responsible for the present communal outbreak have met and are co-operating with one another is encouraging. Swaran Singh suggested the formation of a committee of this kind, and I passed the suggestion on to Mamdot.

2. At the moment I feel that the best thing I can do is to take up Ujjal Singh's suggestion and let him have a paper of some kind about the terms of a possible settlement. I enclose a copy of a draft I have prepared. It is designedly written in an impersonal and non-technical

way and avoids any suggestions so definite as to be converted into commitments or demands. It is intended simply to get things started, and for this limited purpose I do not think it can do any harm. The only possible difficulty is that negotiations of the kind I think necessary, if we are to have any chance of success, would to some extent cut across the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly. Section B of the Assembly is, however, completely inactive with the Muslims non-co-operating, and at some stage the Punjab will either have to make its own constitution or brief the Punjab delegates so that a constitution may be drafted by Section B. A brief approved by the leaders of all three communities would be invaluable.

3. In my paper I have dismissed partition as impracticable, and this is the right line to take at present. If we are forced back upon partition, I could not in advance of discussions with the party leaders make any definite proposal. The crux, as Your Excellency has pointed out, is Lahore and indeed a great part of the Lahore Division where land and other economic interests are largely in non-Muslim hands.

4. If Your Excellency thinks I may safely communicate my paper to Ujjal Singh, will you kindly send me a telegram, and I will send for him as soon as possible. I would of course explain that the paper does not set out to propound any precise solution, but merely suggests that in a united Punjab safeguards of a satisfactory kind could be provided for the minorities. I should like to see Ujjal Singh tomorrow, if possible, and I am therefore sending this letter and the paper by the afternoon air service to Delhi.

5. Amritsar was my main anxiety yesterday. By the evening the city was completely out of control. There was some difficulty in securing reinforcements—we are so tied up now that neither the Area Commander (Bruce) nor I wish to commit reserves until we are quite sure about the need for committing them. The death-roll does not seem to be very high, but the figures we have are only for the corpses which have passed through the hospital mortuary. Most of the population seem to have produced arms, including fire-arms, and many buildings are burning. Masses of people, including many women and children, running away from the city added to the confusion and made it even more difficult than usual to deal with looting. The Area Commander and I decided last night that the situation must be dealt with in a big way. Police reinforcements were despatched by midnight and two British Battalions, which were moved in this morning, must be well into the city by now. They have been instructed to restore order and in particular to disarm the population.

Lahore is rather quieter, though still very uneasy. I have no further reports from Multan. Bad rioting is reported from Rawalpindi with 25 dead and perhaps 100 injured. Rioting has continued in Sialkot and Jullundur.

These affairs always go through three stages—frenzy, funk and recrimination. At Lahore we are reaching the second stage. If we can clean Amritsar up in the next 24 hours, we should be able to cope adequately with any trouble elsewhere. The Police, especially the senior officers, have done magnificently, and we have first class co-operation with the Army.



48. Opposition to League Ministry

Extracts from a Letter from Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 9 March 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 902–6.

No. 654.

...There were two very disturbing factors in the situation. In the first place, the Sikhs regarded the Muslim League agitation and the present communal disturbances as an attack particularly upon them. They felt that they had suffered more than the Muslims and had been caught unprepared. They were therefore likely to have their revenge, and if trouble spread to the rural areas in Muslim districts and was not checked, we must expect similar trouble in Sikh districts and later in the Ambala Division where the Hindu Jats are dominant. Secondly, the resolution of the Congress Working Committee on the Punjab, which appeared in this morning's newspapers, demanded the partition of the Punjab and would almost certainly be treated by the Muslims as a challenge. Unfortunately the resolution had been accompanied by a Joint statement of Congress and Sikh leaders in the Punjab to the effect that they are 'in no circumstances willing to give the slightest assurance or support to the Muslim League in the formation of a Ministry', as they 'are opposed to Pakistan in any shape or form'. In the light of the Sikh attitude and of the resolution and statement it appeared to me that we might be faced with persistent communal trouble gradually spreading to the rural areas all over the Punjab. A coalition now seemed most improbable; the Muslims would insist upon Pakistan, which they are still quite unable to define; and the Hindus and Sikhs would demand the Ravi as the boundary of the non-Muslim State....

6. All the civil officials present said that there was a certain amount of moderate Muslim opinion in favour of peace, but that the local notables dared not co-operate with the authorities, as they would have done under the old official regime or a Unionist Ministry, because they felt that they must keep in with their party. The right solution therefore was to announce that the Section 93 regime would continue for a specified period in the first instance—say, for three months. If this were done, the local notables would come down on the side of the Administration for the time being at least. This opinion is interesting from civil officials serving in a Muslim area, since they tend to discount the case for the minorities and the seriousness of communal trouble....

49. 'Behind Khizar's Resignation: First Fruits of Attlee Declaration in Punjab'

Editorial from *People's Age*, 9 March 1947.

Events have moved fast in the Punjab. The calling off of the League movement has been followed double quick by the resignation of Khizar and the Governor's invitation to the League to form a Ministry.

Close on the heels of this has come news from Lahore of anti-Pakistan demonstrations by Hindu and Sikh students being fired upon by the police and a hartal of Hindu and Sikh shops in protest. The Congress leader Dr Gopichand Bhargava has given a call for an anti-Pakistan Day. The Akali Party threatens that it will fight 'Muslim domination'.

The latest news is that communal clashes have begun and the Caretaker Ministry has resigned, refusing to accept any responsibility for the present situation.

The crisis is drawing to a climax even as we go to the press.

What is it that has turned the wheel almost full circle?

The League leadership claims that it has won the Ministry because of the strength of the movement it had launched.

The Congress and Panthic leaders likewise believe that it was the League movement which frightened Khizar into 'surrender'. They are shocked at his 'betrayal' because they were totally unprepared for it.

What is the reality?

Police Raj Shaken

There is not the slightest doubt that the League movement shook the old Punjab police raj structure to its very foundations.

The widespread character of the movement, exemplified most vividly in the mass participation of thousands of women in the processions and meetings in burqas, the great majority of them participating for the first time in any sort of political activity; the anti-imperialist zeal and courage of the Muslim masses; the fearlessness with which men and women faced tear-gas; the demoralization and the disintegration which began to take place in the police ranks themselves as a result of the all powerful sweep of the movement—all these were factors which helped the Punjab bureaucracy realize that they were faced with a new situation, which required a new solution.

This mighty mass upsurge was an expression of the acute discontent of the vast mass of the common people.

Aimed At Upsurge

The Public Safety Ordinance, it must be remembered, was promulgated at a time when communal tension was receding, and was aimed entirely at suppressing—

The tenant upsurge which was sweeping the Western Punjab, the traditional base of British imperialism.

The growing strike wave led by the NWR workers, which was embracing in its fold all types of Government servants as well.

The immediate future held out the prospect of the tenant upsurge reaching its climax with the harvesting of the new crop in April, and of mass action by the railway workers and all Government servants following the ratification of the Pay Commission's report.

The aim of the Punjab bureaucracy was to prepare the necessary machinery to drown this upsurge in blood.

The Ordinance failed to achieve its purpose... Strikes and tenant uprisings continued with a renewed fervour. The efforts to create communal riots were foiled. Imperialism's eternal Ulster threatened to become a powerful base of anti-imperialist revolt.

The bureaucracy realized more and more that without the help of feudal elements in the League this mass upsurge among the tenants (the majority of whom were Muslims) or among the railway workers could not be crushed. Something more than tear-gas and bullets was needed.

It was in these circumstances that the Attlee declaration came and hastened to its fulfilment a process already begun.

Why Unionists Swung

The Attlee declaration's devilish 'offer' to transfer power to the Provincial Governments existing in June 1948 made the Punjab Ministry a key deciding factor in the battle for and against Pakistan.

In 1946, when the imperialists had thrown in the deciding weight of their stooge Unionist Party in order to help the Congress to form a Ministry, they did so as a key part of their general all-India policy to lure the Congress into the false belief that it could safely accept the vicious, undemocratic grouping clause of the British Plan (which had already been prepared by Professor Coupland) and yet retain the unity of India.

In 1947, with the Congress already safely entrapped in the coils of the British Plan, the formation of an 'independent' North-West group which in reality would remain a British military and economic base, has become both a dire imperialist strategic necessity and also an essential prerequisite for their continued domination of the whole of India through partition.

It was for this reason that it became necessary for the imperialists to shift their balance-holding stooges—the Unionists—from the side of the Congress to the side of the League, in any event before June 1948.

Pressed for Time

That this shift took place so soon was because of the reasons described before—the immediate prospects of the harvest and the consequent mass tenant uprising and of the vast working class upsurge following the Pay Commission's report.

In order to crush these, it was necessary to have the support of the League leadership as the majority of those participating in the upsurge in the Punjab were Muslims.

The bureaucracy also cleverly foresaw that the immediate overthrow of the Ministry, if carefully highlighted through Khizar's statements as a question of the establishment of Pakistan in June 1948, could throw the whole Province into communal war and fulfill their heart's desire which had been foiled till now.

The story of the negotiations with the Muslim League are a sordid tale, which, when fully revealed, will rouse the Muslim masses to indignation at the shameful cringing toady ways of some of their leaders.

It is being said that Firoz Khan Noon wrote a letter from jail to one Jenkins (**not** the Governor) the head of the Political CID in the Province—quite obviously the brain behind all the atrocities being committed against the League masses those very days.

It was a sweet and fawning letter, we are told, recalling the past friendship of the writer and the recipient and appealing to him to end the impasse.

Jenkins was immediately deputed by the bureaucracy to meet Noon and start negotiations.

The two 'friends' talked. They decided to bring the Khan of Mamdot into their 'conference' but took good care not to call in men like Mian Iftikharuddin who would obviously spit on the very idea of making a deal with the head of the hated CID—the biggest enemy of the Punjabi people.

In the meanwhile the arch-reactionary Nazimuddin of Bengal conducted negotiations through Wavell with the Governor, the other Jenkins.

Shameful Retreat

Even from the terms of the agreement which were publicly announced, it was clear to any but the blindest that they were a shameful retreat on the part of the League leaders.

The ban on processions was to continue.

The ban on meetings was lifted, but could be reimposed at any time by Magistrates.

The satyagrahi persons were to be released but not all—those who had committed ‘violence’ were to be kept inside jail.

And above all, the Ordinance and its hateful provisions would remain—only it would be called an ‘Act’.

But the terms NOT announced, the terms of the pact made by Noon and Nazimuddin with the Sahibs were even more shameful.

They agreed themselves to introduce the repressive Act in the Legislature if the Governor ordered his agent Khizar to retire in their favour.

They agreed to take in at least one Unionist into their Cabinet; to provide for certain specific Leaguers named by the bureaucracy in the Cabinet; and to exclude from the Cabinet men with an anti-imperialist record.

Cover for Police Raj

What it amounted to was that in return for the Ministry, the League would agree to form exactly the same cover for Police Raj which the Khizar Ministry had become—and because of its greater popular base it would serve that purpose even better.

Thus the resignation of Khizar is not a victory for the League masses as it is being played up as being, but a studied move on the part of the bureaucracy:

FIRST, to continue their Police Raj in a new way, as in the old way it was no longer possible to crush the growing popular upsurge.

SECONDLY, to unleash a new round of communal conflict in the Punjab and throughout India; and

THIRDLY, as its ultimate objective, to help in the task of carrying out the partition of India and the consequent continuance of the British military and economic stranglehold over India in all but name.

As we go to press, terrible news is pouring in from Punjab. Yesterday (4 March) thirteen were killed, ninety eight injured in police firings. The API report says that a communal clash took place in Chowk Matti, the centre from where communal riots always start in Lahore. Curfew has been imposed.

In these circumstances, a great and tremendous duty rests on the common people of the Province.

The Muslim masses, who so bravely fought police terror all these days; whose anti-imperialist slogans—‘Hamari Larai Bartanvi Sarkar ke Khilaf,’ ‘Down with the Union Jack,’ ‘Police Raj Murdabad’; whose courage and endurance won the admiration of even their political opponents; who kept the demon of communal riots at bay with so much foresight and patience—must once more recall all their anti-imperialist fervour and denounce the intrigues of their ministry-making leaders, declare their determination to resist riots, and keep the Punjab united and not a battleground for the civil war unleashed by the Attlee statement.

They must realize that the only way to win their freedom and keep the Punjab united is through making the demand for the self-determination of the entire Punjabi people their own; in contrast to the communal and separatist demand of the League leadership.

They must compel their leaders to grant the fullest civil liberties in the Province, repeal the Ordinance and scotch the bureaucracy's plan to resurrect it in the form of an Act; to fulfill the demands of the tenants and the workers and carry out the pledges of the Punjab League Manifesto.

Equally must the Hindu and Sikh masses, followers of the Congress recall the many battles they have fought which made the Punjab a Province which the country looked upon as a stronghold of the anti-imperialist struggle. They must remember the name of Bhagat Singh and of all the other great martyrs which they have produced. And they must say:

Shame on the leaders, the quarrelling, factional leaders, who today are busy rousing Hindu and Sikh chauvinism and are thus carrying out the British game of fomenting civil war.

Our interests are common with our Muslim brothers, and together alone can we drive out the British.

Above all it is the duty of the Communist Party and the organized worker, peasant and student movements to throw in their entire weight with death-defying courage to prevent civil war and to cement the common bonds between Hindu, Muslims and Sikhs.

They must expose the British Plan, helping the Congress-League masses to force their leaderships to break with it, and carry forward the struggle of the tenants for a decent human existence and of the working class for a living wage.

50. Demand for Division of Punjab

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Wavell, 9 March 1947

PRO, CAB 134/344, Acc No. 4042, NAI.

NEW DELHI

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have received a letter from Sardar Baldev Singh in regard to recent happenings in the Punjab. We have all been greatly exercised over the Punjab situation as it has developed during the past six weeks. Sardar Baldev Singh, being himself a Punjabi and intimately connected with provincial politics, is naturally even more affected by these developments. He has asked me to convey to you and through you to HMG what the Sikhs feel in this matter. I have suggested to Sardar Baldev Singh to write to you himself.

2. The views that Sardar Baldev Singh has expressed on behalf of the Sikhs are generally shared by the Hindus of the Punjab. There are some Muslims also who are in agreement with them. Although unfortunately this has become a communal issue, it is not essentially so. The recent trouble was started by the demand of the Muslim League to coerce and break up the Coalition Ministry in the province. The first point to which Sardar Baldev Singh wishes to draw special attention, and I wholly agree with him in this matter, is the way certain Members of the Interim Government actively participated in the Punjab agitation and encouraged the attempts to upset the Coalition Government there. This is patently opposed not only to constitutional procedure, but seemed to us wholly lacking in propriety. It put us in a very embarrassing position.

3. The present position is that any attempt to set up a Muslim League ministry in the Punjab in the circumstances will not only give rise to grave apprehensions in the minds of the Sikhs, Hindus and certain others in the Punjab, but also lead to conflict. Indeed it has led to conflict on a severe scale already, and recent events have made the position worse. This apprehension and conflict are obviously due to the fact that the Muslim League openly want to make the whole of the Punjab a Pakistan area and wish to use a League ministry to that end.

4. As I have written to you separately, a proper and fair solution of this difficulty appears to be the division of the Punjab into a predominantly Muslim area and a predominantly non-Muslim area. The Congress has recommended this and I understand that the Sikhs are also agreeable to it and indeed desire it.

5. I earnestly hope that no steps will be taken in the Punjab which may add to the apprehensions of the non-Muslim League elements in the province. If any such thing is done it can only lead to trouble.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

51. Proposed Twin Ministries in Punjab

Extract from a Note by Wavell, 10 March 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 907–8.

SECRET

HIS EXCELLENCY'S NOTE OF INTERVIEW WITH PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU ON 10TH MARCH 1947

1. We began by talking about the situation in the Punjab, and I asked Nehru whether he had any suggestions to offer. He said that the situation was very dangerous and disturbing; and was principally due to a struggle between two fairly equally balanced parties to be in power over the whole Province by June 1948. The Province had remained tranquil under an uneasy equilibrium for a long time, but now that that equilibrium was broken, it was going to be difficult to restore it again. There was not much prospect of a Coalition Government, since the parties mistrusted one another so profoundly; nor could Section 93 continue indefinitely. The only suggestion he had to offer was that there might as a temporary measure be two ministries under the Governor, one for the Eastern part of the Province and one for the Western. This would not be intended to prejudice the issue of partition, but might enable the administration of the Province to be carried on temporarily. I said that I would have the proposal examined, but I was rather doubtful of its being a practical one. Did he propose that there should be fresh elections or that the existing Assembly should split in two parts according to the districts they came from? He did not seem to have thought the matter out very much, but he said that he did not see that an election was necessary, what he proposed was merely a temporary arrangement. I said that I thought the difficulties of such a solution were probably insurmountable, and that certainly a Coalition Government for the whole Province would be very much preferable.
2. We then had some general talk on the political future, particularly with regard to the possible partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Nehru agreed that the Cabinet Mission plan

was the best solution if it could be carried through; and that the only real alternative was a partition of the Punjab and Bengal. I said that I did hope the Congress would make a really determined effort to get agreement with the League on the Mission plan, and asked what steps had been taken. Nehru said that he was intending to have an informal talk with Liaquat Ali Khan as soon as possible and that they expect an official reply from the League to the Congress resolution.

Nehru was quite sober and realistic in what he said, but did not seem really hopeful of a settlement with the League....

52. League Anxious of Sikh Support

Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 10 March 1947
IOR, R/3/1/89, Acc. No. 3414, NAI.

IMMEDIATE

CONFIDENTIAL

No. 39-G. Addressed Viceroy repeated Secretary of State.

Punjab situation. My immediately preceding telegram. I visited Multan today. The city is quiet under curfew but about 30 incidents have been reported from villages. Troops are operating in rural area.

2. Mamdot, Daultana and Firoz saw me by appointment on my return. They gave no indication that they were in a position to form or wished to form a Ministry. They were most apprehensive about attitude of Sikhs and said that their overtures had been rebuffed. They asked me to mediate and I am trying to get hold of Swaran Singh who seems unfortunately to be out of Lahore.

3. Two police officers who saw Tara Singh at Amritsar today say that he is extremely excited; asserts that 'Civil War' has already begun and threatens attacks on police stations and a mass Sikh rising. Murder of Labh Singh a former President of SGPC in Jullundur recently is probably main cause of his resentment. We are doing what we can to get him off the boil. Anti-Pakistan Day tomorrow may give some trouble but I hope not.

4. Move now seems to be on foot to re-establish Hindu-Sikh Coalition with Muslim Unionists. I am sure Khizar will not co-operate and Muslim League have warned me that if such Ministry is formed Muslims will not tolerate it.

53. League Ministry Not Formed through Constitutional Methods

Letter from Baldev Singh to Wavell, 11 March 1947
PRO, CAB 134/344, Acc. No. 4042, NAI.

1 BHAGWAN DAS ROAD, NEW DELHI

Dear Lord Wavell,

Since my talk with you last week about the Punjab affairs, distressing events have taken place in the Province. These are undoubtedly engaging your mind too. The situation seems to be somewhat under control now and I do hope the danger of any deterioration will be most firmly checked. Hindus and Sikhs have, it appears, been attacked and victimised on so large a scale over a wide area as to leave an impression as if a premeditated plan existed to swamp

down even the bare expression of any popular non-Muslim view in favour of the late Coalition Ministry.

I make no secret of my conviction that Muslim League's onslaught on the Coalition Ministry had been engineered in the way it was because the League had despaired of being able to defeat it by constitutional methods. We watched the manoeuvre with grave misgivings from its very start; and you will remember how Sikh opinion reacted almost instinctively to declare, as Master Tara Singh did in a press Statement, that the League's move was in fact an attempt to establish its own domination in the Punjab.

It would be relevant here for me to observe that throughout the period when the League were staging its demonstrations and in the course of which extreme lawlessness was preached and practised, the police and the administration generally stood literally aside. Magistrates and judges sitting in courts were assaulted and Government property destroyed. The Union Jack was removed from court buildings and other places, trampled and displaced by League flags—the police still doing nothing. Strict censorship prevented facts being known but I have now heard from reliable eye witnesses and officials how things were allowed to drift to force the collapse of the Ministry.

I wish to lay the greatest emphasis on the fact that the Muslim League has not achieved its objective by just or constitutional methods. It was in fact sheer hooliganism of the vilest type. The fact that its leader has not been able to secure a majority even to this day is significant. I cannot understand how when palpably illegal and unconstitutional methods were employed to oust a coalition which enjoyed a majority in the Legislature, a minority group could have been invited to capture office.

The issue is one of extreme gravity at this crucial period in view of the latest Statement of HMG's policy. The British Government will hand over power to Indian hands by June 1948. According to their scheme, the Authority or Authorities who receive it, will be such as are in seat or seats of power at the time. The League's illegal onslaught on the Coalition and its design to capture power at this time is ominous in the context of impending changes and I firmly hold that it would be quite improper and contrary to the intentions of HMG to allow this to happen in utter defiance of all propriety and constitutional practice. It seems to me to be unbelievable that HMG could recognize unconstitutional and illegitimate activities at this stage as that would obviously and immediately expose the country to all manner of adventurers.

I stress this as conditions in the Punjab have become delicate and you and the Governor have to exercise the greatest care if my Province is to be saved from an inevitable disaster. You know the impossible attitude adopted by the Muslim League in coming to a settlement with the Sikhs. The British Cabinet Delegation and you assured us last year that everything would be done to secure to the Sikhs the rights they legitimately claimed in the Province which is their Homeland by using your good offices with both the major Political Parties. Beyond fine phrases and lip comfort, nothing has been done by the Muslim League in this direction. It would therefore be by-passing an essential settlement if meanwhile the ruse that has been played in the Punjab were allowed to succeed. Once in power, the Muslim League would obviously dictate its terms and I write to warn you most solemnly that the Sikhs will not be willing to expose themselves to a position of this type even inferentially.

In view of HMG's latest Statement, a completely new situation has arisen in India,—and more so in the Punjab. We had built up the Coalition there, after much labour and great care. It was an inter-communal Ministry, held up as a model by the highest personages. The League had not been kept out as is falsely stated in its quarters. On the contrary, it was asked

to join and the invitation was always there. It remained out because of its deliberate design to dominate the Province—and to this neither Sikhs nor Unionists nor Congress could agree. It was for such exclusive communal domination that the present move was made. The proof, if any were needed that their intentions are not clean when they now seek our collaboration, is their refusal to collaborate in the Coalition. For that reason, the Sikhs cannot and will not join any Ministry if it is now formed by the Muslim League. At this stage therefore and in view particularly of the assurance given to us, to which you were a party that the major Political Parties will be persuaded, obviously before any radical constitutional changes, to concede our just demands, it would be a travesty of justice and a mockery of the constitution, now in effect spent, if power is allowed to pass into these hands.

The Sikh case has been made clear to HMG. In view of the impossible stand taken by the League and the mischief now perpetrated, the only solution is a division of the Punjab and the creation of a new Province embracing the contiguous area where non-Muslims form a clear majority as a whole and have larger property interests. The demand was put forward before the British Cabinet Delegation last year and repeated by me in my letters to the Secretary of State after the publication of the Statement of 16 May. Now that HMG have clearly defined the period when they will hand over power, the satisfaction of Sikh demand has become an immediate and relevant issue and it follows that nothing may meanwhile be done in the Punjab to prejudice this demand. The Sikhs have been recognized as one of the three major communities by HMG. Of all they have, almost everything is in the Punjab. They cannot sit by and see another community being given a place of political vantage in their own Province by dubious means.

I make these observations with considerable restraint. Grave issues involving the life and property of vast masses are at stake. As it is, there is widespread feeling in the Punjab that the administration and the Police there have shown a marked discrimination against Hindu and Sikh demonstrators in contrast with what they did when League was in the field. Lathi charges, large scale firings, and other repressive measures have now been resorted to whereas little or nothing was done before. Then League leaders even holding office in the Interim Government were openly encouraging revolt against authority and no one seems to have pulled them up. Non-Muslims have well-nigh lost all faith in the administration and fear that the worst may happen. I only hope not and expect that you will kindly still intervene. I, on behalf of my community, do urge, with all earnestness, that no League Ministry should be formed and immediate steps should be taken by HMG to divide the Province so that by June 1948, power can be handed over to the respective representatives of the two areas.

I shall be grateful if you will please convey the contents of this letter to HMG.

54. Nehru Visits Punjab

Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Wavell, 13 March 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 296–7.

New Delhi

Dear Lord Wavell,

As you know, events in the Punjab and in the Frontier Province have been distressing us very greatly. Conditions there do not seem to be improving. Last night I had a telephone conversation with Sardar Baldev Singh who was in Lahore and the account he gave me of

what was happening round about Rawalpindi was terrible. Evidently press and other reports do not give all the facts....

I have avoided the Punjab, as I did not wish to interfere in any way, but I feel now that I must go there. I receive moving appeals from friends in the Punjab and yesterday Sardar Baldev Singh also suggested how very desirable it was for me to go there. I have, therefore, decided to pay a brief visit to the Punjab to meet people there informally and to see things for myself. I intend going there tomorrow (Friday) afternoon by air. I shall go to Lahore first and subsequently I should like to go to Amritsar and Rawalpindi. If possible I might pay a brief visit to Peshawar. I expect to be away for the week-end, returning on Monday.

It is difficult to leave my work and important engagements here at this time, but I feel that everything else should be put aside for the moment and I must give first priority to a visit to the Punjab.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

55. League's Resentment against Congress Demand for Partition

Statement by the Executive Committee, Jinnah Club, Aligarh, 14 March 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 254-5.

The Executive Committee of the Jinnah Club, Aligarh, views with contempt and resentment the resolution of the Congress Working Committee advocating the prohibition [*sic* for partition] of the Punjab and strongly endeavours [*sic*] the proposal as it is only calculated to deprive the Muslim majority of its legitimate rights, to deal a deadly blow to Pakistan and to worsen the condition of the Province.

The Congress Working Committee will be well advised to withdraw its resolution immediately, otherwise the Muslims will be forced to adopt measures to combat it whose consequences will not be favoured [*sic*] to the Congress.

The Executive Committee wishes to make it clear that if the Congress really desires to come to a mutual agreement with the Muslim League, there is no alternative for the Congress but to accept the principle of Pakistan and make a compromise with the Muslim League for the purpose of co-operation between Hindustan and Pakistan on a footing of equality.

S. IBNAI HASAN
Propaganda Secretary,
Jinnah Club, Aligarh, UP

56. 'Impressions of the Punjab Campaign'

Article in *Dawn*, 15 March 1947.

'IMPRESSIONS OF THE PUNJAB CAMPAIGN' By Mrs H.A Hakam, MLA, Bengal

I had been keenly following the developments of the Muslim League's agitation in the Punjab. On learning of the jail incident, the assault on the ladies and girls and the injury sustained by them, I immediately started for the Punjab. Leaving Calcutta on 19 February (Mrs M. Yunus joining me at Patna) we arrived at Lahore on the 21st. I had not given any information about

my departure to Lahore. On arrival I went to the residence of Begum Tassaduq Hussain, MLA; she was imprisoned. Begum Tassaduq Hussain who had received injuries after admittance to hospital came to her house for a day but was re-arrested for giving a speech. This was on the evening before I arrived.

On the evening of my arrival we went with Dr Tassaduq Hussain to the women's Jail but unfortunately we were not allowed to see our brave sisters who were behind the bars. The next day I phoned the Home Secretary, Mr MacDonald, for permission to see them, but received the reply that it was absolutely impossible to meet them. This was a sure proof of the iron-hand of the Government. I had gone to the Punjab to see the actual situation and to acquaint myself with the events, as the civil liberties of the people were being crushed, and the press was being muzzled.

It was an inspiration to see the urge and enthusiasm of the masses. Even little children took part in the demonstrations. Every evening processions were taken out generally starting from Mochi Darwaza, after a meeting and addresses by League Leaders, and ending at Charing Cross near the Assembly Chambers. Here the police would form a strong cordon composed of a posse of hundreds, with the police vans in readiness. The demonstrators with League banners, shouting League slogans and demanding their civil liberties, would stop in front of the police cordon and would sit down at the orders of their leader in a disciplined manner. Then after a few words, those who were to court arrest on that day would approach the police cordon after a tussle, would break through the cordon and thereby get arrested. After this the demonstrators would disperse peacefully. The discipline of the people was remarkable. Though they would be in thousands or lacs, no untoward incident or accident took place. The roads would be closed to traffic long before the arrival of processionists. Hundreds of policemen with lathies would arrive and form strong cordons and the high officials of the police would be present. On both sides of the road the public of all nationalities would gather hundreds. The largest procession was taken out on the 24th (Punjab Day) when there was a successful general strike. The demonstrators on that day numbered over 3 lacs.

The most remarkable feature of the campaign was the part played by Muslim women of the province who vied with men in making sacrifices. The credit goes to them for carrying on the struggle in all parts of the province. At Lahore in the beginning they marched in batches through the different localities of the city. When the whole town had taken up the challenge, the women would all gather at some appointed place. After the usual meeting and speeches (I had the honour of addressing them twice) they would form columns and proceed to their destinations according to programme in a very orderly way with their leader in front, banner in hand.

On 22 February, they assembled at Charing Cross Park where the statue of Queen Victoria stands. The League flag was hoisted on the statue. The speakers addressed the gathering from the steps. Lines were formed after the meeting which marched to the Government house, the Radio Station and then to the other gate of the Government House. The League Flags were planted on the gates. After the demonstration they dispersed quietly at 3 p.m.

On 24 February, (Punjab Day) women demonstrators were over 20,000 and had assembled from the suburbs and other districts. They had gathered at Gol Bagh where Begum Yusuf Haroon of Karachi was present. The women marched to the Secretariat. There was a strong police cordon with police vans, barring the road in front. The demonstrators broke through the cordon and clambering over the iron gates of the Secretariat, opened the gates and went inside. But the Premier was not there as he had left a few minutes earlier. From there the women

proceeded to the Kutchery. After hauling down the Union Jack, they hoisted the proud flag of the Muslim League on the top of the building. It was a sight which could never be forgotten by those who had witnessed it. After completion they dispersed peacefully and went to their homes.

On the 25th Begum Hidayat Ullah led the procession and she was injured by the police lathi charge, after procession had entered the Secretariat. Tear Gas was also used on the occasion but they faced it boldly and dispersed only after they had performed their duty.

The Muslim women of the Punjab by rallying together, irrespective of rank and position, carried on their struggle in a disciplined manner and have at last been successful in attaining their objectives. All marched together—aged women, young girls, ladies of the highest societies, poor women—all on foot. The most marvellous features of it was that the purdah-nashin ladies formed the majority.

Our sisters of Lahore gave us a warm reception and welcomed us for coming to help them from Bengal, Bihar and Sind. It would not be out of place to mention the assistance rendered by the Staff Reporters of 'Dawn' and the 'Pakistan Times' to this cause by their presence on these occasions and by their Press despatches outside the province, as the Press was gagged in the Punjab. On return from Lahore I stopped for a day at Patna and addressed a public meeting of Muslim ladies. Resolutions congratulating the gallant sisters of the Punjab were passed at the meeting. The Muslim women of Bihar have been very much inspired by the bravery and courage of the Punjab women and they are prepared to make every sacrifice for the cause of Muslim League. It gladdens one's heart to see the surge of Islamic spirit that is now swaying among Muslims and Muslim women throughout the length and breadth of India. The Muslim women of Bihar after having undergone terrible privations, unparalleled in history, are still ready to sacrifice their lives and whatever is left after the great calamity of Bihar. This noble spirit heralds the attainment of Pakistan which is drawing nearer and nearer by the grace of Providence.

57. 'Communists Say Popular Punjab Govt Means Peace'

Daily Worker, 20 March 1947.

A NEW popular Coalition Ministry of the Moslem League, the Congress and the Akalis (Sikhs) must immediately replace the present Governor's regime in the Punjab.

This is the only way to end the communal riots in which more than 1,000 people have been killed, and to restore peace.

Mr P.C. Joshi, general secretary of the Indian Communist Party, expressed this view writing in the *People's Age* on the present position in the Punjab.

'The hell-fires let loose in the Punjab reveal the utter falsity of the promise contained in Premier Attlee's recent declaration of transfer of power to Indian hands by June, 1948,' says Mr Joshi.

'Not transfer of power, but provoking civil war among Indians by playing off one party against another is the imperialist game.'

The Punjab is being used as a British pawn to force Congress to get the Moslem League inside the Constituent Assembly, Mr Joshi pointed out.

'They aim to produce a constitution as per British dictation and needs or alternatively, to accept partition of India with the British dictating terms to both sides separately.

'And with true imperialist hypocrisy they call this: "transfer of power".'

The Indian Communists have proposed a practical programme on which the new coalition should be formed.

Restore Civil Liberties

This programme demands the withdrawal of the Public Safety Ordinance; restoration of civil liberties; and prompt measures against food black marketeers.

It calls also for legislation for a living wage for workers and employees and the control of profits; a ban on eviction of tenants by landlords, and legislation to abolish landlordism, with land for the peasants.

'Unless a popular Ministry is formed, pledged to such a democratic programme of strengthening the people, crushing the vested interests and checking the bureaucracy, there is no prospect of peace in the province,' declares Mr Joshi.

The Communists have helped in the building up of all-inclusive Peace Committees in the towns and villages to rouse the mass of the people against the instigators of the riots.

Mr Joshi warned against the moves of the bureaucrats and those riot-instigating politicians who want to exclude the Communists from such committees.

B. NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE

1. Muslim League Agitation Begins

Letter from Olaf Caroe to Wavell, 22 February 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 787-9.

CONFIDENTIAL

D.O. NO. GH-21

2. We had a bad day yesterday and are in for a difficult period. After the Mardan election the League began to think out methods of direct action, partly stimulated by Punjab events and partly yielding to the cry of Islam in danger over the Sikh girl married to a Moslem in Hazara after her Sikh husband had been murdered in the Hazara disturbances. She was brought into Peshawar, and Dr Khan Sahib put her up in his own house, unwisely as I think, and as I told him. She was kept there for several days and gave a perfectly fair statement at the end of it in the presence of her new Moslem husband and her Sikh relations that she wished to return to Sikhism. She was thereupon sent back to Hazara, where to save her life she has had to be placed in protective custody in jail. The League are trying to make what capital they can out of this affair on the lines of the Islam Bibi case of ten years ago, which originally set the Faqir of Ipi going. They arranged a large protest meeting in Peshawar, and took the opportunity of attacking what they call the black laws in Hazara and the methods adopted in handling the Hazara border tribes, and they have been busy in Mardan also. In Peshawar we decided to keep them out of the Cantonment, and we had adequate police forces available, but the meeting developed into a procession of at least 5,000 which broke the cordons and came right up the road in front of my house into the Premier's garden, again breaking the cordon and besieging his house on all sides. I am sorry to say that the police refused to obey orders to open fire. Tear gas was used, but without effect. The police did not actually mutiny or anything of that kind, but though they went through the motions of loading they quietly disobeyed orders to fire. The mob in Khan Sahib's garden was dangerous: it broke all his windows and threw

stones into the rooms, but did not succeed in storming the house. The old man was brave as a lion, and went out on top of the porch to tell the crowd what he thought of them. He refused to give away any points, and eventually the Deputy Commissioner was able to get the crowd to move on to the jail. In the circumstances Dr Khan Sahib was lucky to get away with his life. I went over as soon as the mob had started to disperse and found the house a shambles of broken glass. Mrs Khan Sahib was splendid and so were his Parliamentary Secretary and one of the other Ministers who stuck by him through the worst. The Deputy Commissioner and the Senior Superintendent of Police (both Indians) did their best, the former exposing himself amongst crowds carrying spears and daggers and managing to argue them out of more dangerous actions. There have been threats that the same tactics would be followed today, and we have therefore turned out troops in large numbers and did a flag march round the city, holding troops ready at the exits and also at the important entrances into the Cantonment, with definite instructions that they would have to fire if necessary. So far this show of force has succeeded in preventing any repetition of yesterday's incidents, but what is worrying is the proof of police demoralization. It has been the gradual process which one associates with all Congress Governments, but the real rot set in with Nehru's visit, which had the result of making all Moslem Government servants, except a few at the very top, disloyal in their hearts to a regime which represents in their eyes Hindu domination. I think, too, that the action taken against Mahbub Ali and various others has done a great deal to undermine the confidence of the public servant generally, as have the continual diatribes of that idiot Abdul Ghaffar Khan. My prayer is that we shall not be driven into using military force, for with tempers as they are there will be considerable casualties, and we shall get the tribes down as in 1930.

2. 'NWFP League Condemns Frontier Government's Aggression at Mardan'

22 February 1947

Extract from a Report from *Pakistan Times* cited in *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 329–30.

PESHAWAR, 20 Feb.—A meeting of the NWFP Provincial Muslim League was held here today which lasted eight hours. Pir Sahib Manki Sharif was present by special invitation. The Secretary, Provincial League, informed pressmen that the political situation in the Frontier and the Punjab was discussed, and the following resolution was adopted:

'Whereas the Congress Government have deliberately embarked on a policy of crushing the Muslim League Organization and its legitimate constitutional activities; whereas in pursuance of that policy the Congress Government have been deliberately suppressing civil liberties in every possible manner as evidenced by the unnecessary and uncalled-for promulgation in Hazara of the medieval and black laws; and whereas the Government have intentionally been encroaching on the Muslim religious rights as has been evidenced by the recent high-handed and unjustified action of the Ministry in enforcing apostasy on a Muslim convert under duress which has led to a province-wide resentment amongst Muslims of the NWFP and the Tribal Areas, the Council feels that it can no longer allow matters to pass unchallenged. It condemns, in strongest terms, the unprovoked interference by authorities in the peaceful mass protest meeting held at Mardan in this connection, by the arrest of leaders, use of tear-gas and indiscriminate *lathi*-charge.

‘The Council is of the opinion that the situation is highly grave and will lead to disaster, the entire responsibility for which would rest on the shoulders of the Government unless this policy is immediately reversed. We, therefore, emphatically urge upon the Government to call an immediate halt to this unjustified policy and urge that they should instantly restore civil liberties in the Province, withdraw all black laws, and remove all checks on the Muslim convert.

‘The Council has, in view of the above, appointed a War Council to watch the developments and carry on the struggle which has been forced upon them by the Government, in a strictly non-communal manner. The Council also urges upon the Muslim public to hold themselves in readiness for all eventualities.’...

3. ‘Abdul Qaiyum Arrested at Mardan’

22 February 1947

Report from *Pakistan Times* cited in *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 328.

PESHAWAR, 20 Feb.—Mr Abdul Qaiyum Khan, Leader of the Opposition in the Frontier Assembly, and 16 other Muslim League leaders were arrested at Mardan today.

The circumstances leading to the arrest of the League leaders were that a League procession marched to the residence of the Deputy Commissioner, demanding that Basanti, a Sikh girl of Hazara, alleged to have embraced Islam and married a Muslim, should be immediately handed over to them. A day earlier a Muslim League protest meeting was held at Peshawar where a resolution was passed on the same subject. A Muslim League deputation headed by Mr Abdul Qaiyum Khan, Leader of the Opposition, also waited upon the Frontier Premier, Dr Khan the same evening.

According to a communiqué issued by the Frontier Government, when the procession was returning from the Deputy Commissioner’s office, Khan Abdul Qaiyum arrived from Peshawar. He asked the District Magistrate for permission to address the crowd, so that he might ask it to disperse. When he began to speak to the crowd, however, he declared he had come with the intention of defying the District Magistrate’s order. Khan Abdul Qaiyum Khan, Muhammad Akbar Khan and Pir Muhammad Khan were arrested. Tear-gas was used to disperse the crowd.

4. ‘Pir of Manki Sharif’s Appeal’

22 February 1947

Report from *Pakistan Times* as cited in *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 328–9.

‘I strongly condemn the action of the Frontier Government and will hold them responsible for any eventuality that may arise. I can say this much that an indignant wave of resentment is sweeping the whole of the Frontier Province,’ says Pir Sahib of Manki Sharif, a prominent leader of the Frontier Muslim League.

The Pir Sahib appeals to the Muslims of the Frontier Province as well as those of the Tribal Areas to remain peaceful and ‘take every care not to give a communal strife to the incident, because we are fighting against the Government and not against any community.’



5. 'League Movement Is Non-violent and Non-communal'

25 February 1947

Report from *Pakistan Times* as cited in *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 330–1.

Peshawar, 23 Feb.—Sh Arbab Dur Khan, General Secretary, Muslim League War Council, issued the following statement to the Press yesterday.

'The Frontier Government communiqué, relating to the procession organized by the Muslim League yesterday gave out that processionists were in possession of guns, revolvers and other weapons. The Government fabricated this malicious lie in order to arm themselves with an excuse to crush merely a non-violent and strictly non-communal movement launched for the restoration of civil liberties.

'We welcome what might be in store for us, but thousands of people, who accompanied the procession and many more who witnessed it, must have been amused to hear Dr Khan Sahib proclaim to the world with an air of injured innocence what he knows to be manifest untruth.

'There is no doubt that some irresponsible persons did not behave properly at the Premier's residence. But the Muslim League National Guards and workers throughout behaved like a disciplined army.'

Mr Dost Muhammad Khan, Advocate, was arrested yesterday.

6. 'Aggressors Must Be Punished: *Khan Sahib's Resolve*—Ministry Never Interfere with Civil Liberties'

The Tribune, 2 March 1947.

PESHAWAR, 1 March.—Dr Khan Sahib, Premier of N-WFP, has issued the following statement:

'After having attempted to spread lawlessness in the N-WFP, some irresponsible elements are now trying to assault the Frontier Ministry with the charge of denying civil liberties to the people. I do not generally take notice of press propaganda, but, considering the false statements being put over, I am obliged to state the true facts so that the public may not be misled.

'There has been no greater champion of civil liberties in the North West Frontier Province than the party of which I am the elected leader in the Legislative Assembly.

'Every individual of this party has always stood for the rights of the people, indeed, to secure these rights for the common man, we have made many sacrifices. But the licence for loot and violence cannot come within the definition of civil liberties.

'Everyone knows that the Frontier Ministry have never interfered with the speeches, slogans, and demonstrations and even withhold action when abusive and provocative language was used. But when violent and aggressive attacks were made on peaceful citizens and their shops were looted, the Government could not just be a silent spectator. Prompt action had to be taken. No Government worth the name can tolerate such deplorable incidents as happened in Peshawar on 20 February or in Mardan on 18 February. I am sure the public will understand why firm action is necessary on the part of the Government to punish those who have taken law into their own hands.'—API



7. 'Pir of Zakori Arrested in D.I. Khan'

Dawn, 2 March 1947.

Peshawar, Saturday.—PIR ABDUL LATIF SAHIB of Zakori was arrested with ten local leaders when, the hitherto quiet, Dera Ismail Khan joined the Muslim League Civil liberties movement on the Frontier, yesterday.

The arrest of the Pir Saheb has caused great sensation and Muslims, from neighboring villages, are pouring in thousands to court arrest.

Fifty seven Muslim League Volunteers were arrested in Peshawar, when the movement entered in its tenth day, today....

8. 'Chief Khan of Jadun Tribe Arrested'

Dawn, 2 March 1947.

PESHAWAR, Sunday.—On Sunday, the eleventh day of the Muslim League civil liberties movement in the Frontier Provinces, the Jadun tribesmen also joined the movement. Khan Faqir Khan, Chief Khan of Jadun together with Qalander Khan, Mohammad Yaqub Khan and 12 volunteers of Jadun tribe, was arrested today in Abbottabad. They have been sent to Haripur Central Jail.

Thousands of Jadun tribesmen, under the leadership of their Chief Khan marched through the streets of Abbottabad demanding the restoration of civil liberties. Five other processions were taken out in Abbottabad, today. Thirty two persons, are reported to have been arrested.

There were demonstrations all over the Province, today, in Nowshera, Mansehra, ...Havelian, Haripur, Bannu, Abbottabad, Peshawar and Dhamtour in Hazara District. Fifteen arrests were made in Mardan and eighty-eight in Peshawar....

9. "League's Agitation Senseless": Frontier Speaker's View'

The Tribune, 5 March 1947.

D.I. KHAN, 4 March—'Mr Clement Attlee's recent declaration on India of handing over complete control of the Government to Indians by June, 1948, has, unfortunately, created a somewhat wrong impression in the minds of certain League-minded Muslims to the effect that probably the Labour Government in June, 1948, will hand over British power in India to individual provinces and will leave the centre in the lurch,' writes Nawabzada Allah Nawaz Khan, Speaker, NWFP in a statement to the Press.

'This impression, I am afraid, is utterly wrong and they are sadly mistaken because under all conditions and in all circumstances a union centre for India is inevitable and an absolute necessity, because of India's economical, strategical, geographical and political position in the world affairs.

'It is futile and senseless to harass Congress Ministries in Muslim majority provinces with a view to substitute them by League ministries in those parts before June, 1948, in order to await the auspicious month of June, for receiving political power from the hands of the outgoing British. If this is not the background of a Leaguer's mind, then why all this meaningless agitation and a storm in a tea cup in the NWFP as elsewhere?'



10. 'Make Over the Reins of Government to Real Representatives'

5 March 1947

Report from *Pakistan Times* as cited in *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 321.

'I congratulate Malik Khizar Hayat Khan on the step that he has taken and earnestly draw the attention of Dr Khan Sahib, Premier of the NWFP, to his statement,' says Mr Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Health Member, Government of India, in a statement.

He adds: 'The two major nations of India are now confronted with the urgent problem of deciding the future shape of India. At a juncture like the present, Dr Khan Sahib will be doing a great harm to the Muslim nation if he does not make over the reins of Provincial Government to those who really represent the Muslims. In a predominantly Muslim province like the NWFP the present set-up of Provincial Government is all the more incongruous and calls for immediate changes.

'Since the last general election in the Frontier Province, Muslim opinion there has become much more emphatic in its support of the Muslim League and its ideals. Dr Khan Sahib should not disregard this. Division on party lines among Muslims was not so harmful in the Frontier Province in the past, but the British Prime Minister's statement has created a new situation to which every Muslim, irrespective of his party affiliation in the past, should adjust himself in the interests not only of Muslim nation but also in the interest of the peace of India as a whole.'

11. 'About 2,500 Arrested in N-WFP So Far: Court Picketing Continues'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 7 March 1947.

PESHAWAR, Wednesday.—TODAY 40 Muslim Leaguers besides 16 students of the Islamia College were arrested while ricketing [*sic*] the District ad Session Courts and, according to a report from the Provincial Muslim League Office, about 2,500 Leaguers have been arrested so far in the Frontier Province since the movement began.

Seven Muslim League political prisoners were sentenced today to one year's imprisonment each under Section 40 FCR and the accused were not allowed even to defend themselves.

These seven League prisoners, namely, Syed Abdullah Shah, Editor the 'Alflah', Syed Mushtaq Ahmad, Mian Mohammad Shafi, contractor, Alhaj Abdur Rahman of Sardargari, Mr Ghiasuddin Qureshi, Mr Mohd Akram Khan and Arbab Mohammad Afzal Khan and Arbab Mohammad Afzal Khan were produced before the Deputy Commissioner, Peshawar and were asked to furnish Rs 500 each as security for one year, which all of them refused.

The trial of some people who had been arrested at Mardan has been postponed until tomorrow. The trial was due to begin in the Central Jail, Peshawar, today.

Thirty students of the Islamia College were arrested yesterday near Government House.

In obedience to the advice of Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar and Mr Mohd Ismail Khan Muslim students had been calm and quiet and were busy preparing for their examinations, but on hearing of Sir Khizr Hayat's resignation, they sent a deputation of 20 students, including Mr Mohammad Shibli, nephew of Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, to Dr Khan Sahib to ask him to join the Muslim League, but the police arrested them....

Processions were taken out as usual in Paniala, Tank, Gonal; Kulachi, Paharpur and big villages in the District, but no arrests were made.

Kohat Muslim Leaguers picketed the civil courts today and a hundred volunteers including leaders were arrested. All courts remained closed on 3, 4 and 5 March.

12. Governor's Assessment of the League Campaign

Extract from a Letter from Olaf Caroe to Wavell, 8 March 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 896–7.

CONFIDENTIAL

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, PESHAWAR

D.O. NO. GH-27

2. Our League Direct Action Campaign is growing in volume, and I do not feel that my Ministry realize that the flood may quite conceivably sweep them away. I had a long talk with them to-day on the whole subject in the light of the alarming developments in the Punjab. The present position is that we have got practically the whole Opposition in jail, with the Assembly session starting the day after tomorrow. I told them there were four courses which they could follow. The first was to go on as at present, with the Opposition in jail, and say and do nothing. This would mean that the movement would continue to smoulder, and might well break into violence under the stimulus of Punjab events, and in any case would pillory them before the world as imprisoning the Opposition during an Assembly session. The second was to make an announcement, saying that they would welcome a return to constitutional processes, to release the MLAs unilaterally in order that they might take part in the Assembly proceedings, and to place a ban on processions but to allow meetings. This was the course which I originally favored, and I should I think have been able to persuade Dr Khan Sahib to take it had it not been for the developments in the Punjab, but as things are I agree with him that it would be dangerous. The third course was to appeal to the electorate for a fresh mandate. I pointed out to all the Ministers, including the Hindu representative, that the position in the House did not represent the position in the country. The minorities have 25 per cent of the members, although their population is only 7 per cent of our total, and in the country they count for practically nothing, which showed that the Ministry had to consider afresh whether they had the majority of Pathans behind them. Even at the last election the scales were almost equal. I told them that there had been a swing-away from them during the past year, and I said that they were always underrating their opponents—a fatal thing to do. They just refused to admit that the position is in fact like this, in spite of the recent Mardan election, and are determined to cling to power as long as they can. They even said that on no account would they agree to another general election before a new constitution had been framed. I told them that I was quite certain they would be forced into appealing to the electorate again long before that date and they would do well continually to assess their position with the electorate. I said, however, that to meet the immediate difficulty the best course would be to maintain the law with one hand, but on the other to make overtures through go-betweens for a settlement, on the ground that the time had more than come when Pathans should give up their internecine squabbles and begin to consider how the various parties could at least co-operate in constitutional disagreement to find the proper place for the Pathan race in the new India. I said that this was my strong advice, but that given the present position in which my responsibility in any case would come to an end little more than a year from now I was not prepared to override them, and they must take the full responsibility for the decision they now took. Whatever they did I would do my best to help them through. They refused entirely to open negotiations of any kind at present, and

the most I could get them to agree to was to go on as at present, keeping the Opposition in jail, but to make an announcement that they favored constitutional processes and did not wish to keep anyone locked up longer than necessary. At the same time they were determined—and rightly—to maintain the law, whether broken collectively or individually. An announcement on these lines will be issued by Dr Khan Sahib to-day. I think myself that by hanging on without making any substantial move towards reconciliation the position of the Ministry will gradually grow weaker, and that they do not realize how far public opinion is falling away from them. There are also signs that the Mohmands and some of the Wazirs are beginning to growl.

13. 'Assault on Dr Khan Sahib'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 10 March 1947.

PESHAWAR, 7 March.—The Frontier Provincial Congress Executive passed a comprehensive resolution recently on the political situation in the province arising out of the Muslim League agitation and declared:

'We earnestly expect from all the League workers of the province that they should have due regard for the sentiments of decency, fairplay and good morals in the furtherance of their political ideals so that restrictions on the civil liberties of the general population may not remain in force and communal bickering may not be created.'...

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

'The Working Committee has deeply pondered over the present situation arising out of the League Movement and has come to the conclusion that this was going to be the inevitable result of the type of propaganda launched by the Muslim League following its collapse in the last provincial general elections. The whole foundation of the Muslim League struggle rested on the aggravation of communal passions.

'Political decency was completely set aside. Abusive language was used and irreligious acts performed in the name of religion. Greatly exaggerated accounts relating to the unfortunate events in other provinces in general and in Bihar in particular were given which led to the incidents in Hazara district where innocent people were turned out of their houses, looted and put to death.

'Thereafter communal friction was caused in Mardan District, culminating in the looting of several shops, assaults on several persons and ultimately promulgation of Section 144 CrPC.

'At Peshawar, a big crowd consisting of almost all the prominent League workers forced its way into the Premier's house, hurled abuses, assaulted the person of Dr Khan Sahib Premier and Mohd Yahya Jan, Education Minister, and also damaged the furniture of the house. Here too prohibitory orders were imposed quite reluctantly.

'The Congress has always struggled hard for the maintenance of civil liberties, and even now wants that there should be no interference with these fundamental privileges, but it cannot allow in any way the continuance of the civil licentiousness in the name of civil liberty, thus giving way to the jeopardy of the people, individual life property, self-respect and honour.'

14. 'Breakers of Law Must Be Punished: Khan Sahib's Warning'

Dawn, 11 March 1947.

PESHAWAR, 10 March.—The Frontier Premier, Dr Khan Sahib, has issued the following statement:

‘The course which the events of the past few months have taken call for a brief review of the situation. It has always been considered incumbent on the majority community to see to it that the minorities are able to live safely in this province, but dissemination in certain quarters of communal hatred had led to a number of unfortunate occurrences in Hazara district which caused grave loss of life. Consequently, the Provincial Government were obliged to take proper measures with at least this result that, in spite of the exposed position of Hazara district, the loss of life there has been less than in other parts of India where discord of this nature has raised its head.

‘The Provincial Government are glad to say that a very satisfactory settlement has now been reached with the border tribes. It has, therefore, been possible for His Excellency the Governor to release the hostages which were willingly given by the tribes as guarantee of their agreement to meet the demands made on them for amends.

‘To deal with the situation in the interior of Hazara district itself, it was necessary for the Governor to promulgate a special ordinance. The Provincial Government had at first thought of replacing it with a Bill but on further consideration they have come to the decision that it is unnecessary to continue the ordinance. They would have advised the Governor to withdraw the ordinance forthwith but unfortunate happenings in the Punjab render it necessary to retain the ordinance for some time. When the conditions permit the Ministry shall have no hesitation in advising the Governor to withdraw the ordinance.

‘The Government have always been and remain conscious that every party should have full opportunity to express its views in a constitutional manner. But no democratically elected majority Government can tolerate widespread acts of violence and all those who have defied the law individual or collectively will be dealt with in accordance with the law.

‘The public is fully aware that action which the Government have taken against certain people had been forced on them. They, therefore, do not intend to keep any individual a day more than is absolutely essential in the interest of public peace with the exception of those guilty of violence.’—United Press

15. ‘Tribal People Not to Negotiate with Hindu Government’

Dawn, 12 March 1947.

BANNU, Tuesday.—A REPRESENTATIVE Jirga of the Mahsuds and Wazirs of the South Waziristan Agency was held at Tonk at the week-end under the presidentship of Capt Mir Basha Khan. Prominent among those who attended the meeting were Khan Bahadur Haji Majradil Khan, Malik Kutab Khan, Col Shah Pasand, Kaiser Khan, Samandar Khan, Saif Ali Khan, Haji Soheb Khan, Mir Badshah Khan and Shahzad Khan.

The Jirga discussed the forthcoming visit of the Tribal Area Sub-Committee set up by the Constituent Assembly under the presidentship of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and unanimously decided that the Mahsuds and Wazirs of Waziristan were against the visit of the Committee and were not prepared to negotiate with the representatives of the Hindu Government.

The Jirga passed a resolution, asking the Committee, not to visit that area, otherwise, the reception they would have will be in no way better than what Pandit Nehru and his party had. The resolution further said that the people of that area should not be held responsible for any unhappy experience the Committee may have to pass through.

By another resolution the Jirga reiterated its faith in the All India Muslim League and its full confidence in the leadership of Qaed-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah.—OPI

16. Governor's Report on Continuing League Agitation

Extract from a Telegram from Olaf Caroe to Wavell, 13 March 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 930–1.

IMMEDIATE

No. CA/I8. North-West Frontier Province situation....On 21st February large and dangerous procession formed in Peshawar city, marched into cantonment, overpowering police, and surrounded Premier's house of which windows were broken but fortunately no loss of life occurred. Meanwhile League leaders instituted picketing of courts and public buildings and had been defying bans Section 144 in Mardan and elsewhere. As a result of this and of demonstrations in Peshawar League leaders, including most of MLAs, were arrested with the result that with budget session starting on 10th March, main body of Opposition was in jail. Arrests were however made for bailable offences or under security sections and those arrested could have obtained freedom by giving security or bail. On my advice Ministry, though reluctant, have refrained from arrest of Manki Mullah.

2. While strongly supporting Ministry in action taken to maintain law and control dangerous demonstrations, I urged them to open negotiations with League leaders on basis of statement of 20th February before Assembly met. This they refused to do and League demonstration was staged Assembly Hall on 10th March. It was necessary to support police with troops. Mob made ugly rushes and troops had to open controlled fire. Seven rounds fired, 15 casualties sustained of which two have subsequently died. This clash has on the whole steadied situation but immediate result was that 17 cases of stabbing Hindus took place on the same afternoon in Peshawar City. In consultation with military I decided to occupy city forthwith and impose curfew. Portion of British battalion in Peshawar with other troops was utilized for this purpose and had reassuring effect all round. Communal incidents have now spread to villages east and south of Peshawar where there have been some murders and some forcible conversion of Sikhs. On 10th all telephone lines round Peshawar were cut and poles damaged. Trunks now restored.

3. Elsewhere in Province situation in Hazara which was returning to normal has deteriorated. Gurudwaras have been burnt, individual Sikhs murdered and forced conversions have taken place. Main bazaar in large village of Ot Gaj (?) bullah is reported destroyed by fire. Picketing continues and large demonstrations have taken place in districts of Mardan, Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail but so far without casualties.

4. Tribes have hitherto taken no overt action and are unlikely to do so if control is maintained in Peshawar and other chief urban centers and flow of food can be assured. Shortage of food will lead to tribal invasion of more than one part of frontier on considerable scale and maintenance of food traffic is the most essential need of the whole situation.

5. I visited all parts of Peshawar city on 11th March and was well received by all communities. Hindus and Sikhs are frightened and stray stabbing assaults by Moslems are still taking place. On 12th March large funeral procession was taken out by League in city to escort body of one man killed by firing on 10th March. As this was outside curfew hours it was decided to let it go. Curfew in Peshawar City is still being enforced. Today Moslem shops have opened but Hindus still remain closed. I am hopeful that if flow of food consignments can be maintained we have turned the corner, but situation may deteriorate under influence of leaders, either Congress or League, from elsewhere or if Congress are foolish enough to send up Advisory Committee of

Constituent Assembly to enquire into tribal problems or interfere in other ways. Doctor Khan Sahib is displaying his usual courage but Ministry is naturally disturbed.

Repeated to Secretary of State for India, Governor of the Punjab and Governor of Sind.

17. “Churchill’s Friends” Active in N-WFP

Dawn, 15 March 1947.

PESHAWAR, 14 March.—Dr Khan Sahib, the Frontier Premier, addressing a huge public meeting at Charsadda on 12 March said ‘a false revolution has been forced on us. Today a new party has arisen in the Frontier which declares achievement of India’s freedom as its goal but in reality its partymen are friends of Mr Churchill, the reactionary leader of Opposition, whose sole aim is to create an unbridgeable differences between the people of India and Great Britain.’

Continuing Dr Khan Sahib said: ‘It is very difficult to understand the civil disobedience movement launched by the Muslim League against the people’s Government, which can be removed only by persuading the electorate to vote for the opposition. The civil disobedience movement that we Congressites launched so far were against an irresponsible and autocratic Government. We were successful to the extent that by June 1948 it will disappear. But what this League movement signifies I do not know.’

Dr Khan Sahib also referred to the destruction of public utility properties and said: ‘It had come to my knowledge that telegraph posts and other government properties were tampered with. All this property is yours. It is you who are the Government. Consequently, it is your duty to protect these properties.’

He appealed to the brave Pathans as members of the majority community to assure safety, honour and protection of the members of minority community. He said it was their sacred duty.

In conclusion Dr Khan Sahib asked the audience: ‘I put a straight question to you. Do you want me to resign?’ To this the entire audience, like one man, replied, ‘Please do not commit this mistake.’ One old man rose and accosted the Premier, ‘Are you going to leave us to robbers?’—United Press.

18. ‘25,000 Waziri Tribesmen Defy Frontier Ban’

Dawn, 17 March 1947.

PESHAWAR, Sunday.—A PROCESSION of about 25,000 Waziri tribesmen headed by Ghazi Marjan and Akhiajan defied the Frontier ban by parading round the Bannu city jail, as the League civil liberties movement entered into its 25th day today.

Three hundred League volunteers, including Khan Atta Mohammed Khan, Malik Yousuf Khan and Malik Ali Jan were put under arrest while picketing at a Bannu liquor shop.

Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, Communications Member in the Interim Government and Mr Siddique Ali Khan accompanied by Sultan Mohd Khan, President of the Provincial Muslim league Defence Committee, visited Mardan today. They met the Muslim League leaders of the district and discussed with them the present political situation in the Province.



19. Governor's Objection to Nehru's Visit

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Wavell, 19 March 1947

SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 315–17.

Dear Lord Wavell,

When I was in Lahore I received your message asking me not to proceed to Peshawar as I had intended to do. In deference to your wishes I cancelled my visit to Peshawar. I must say, however, that I was hurt by this development. It was not merely the personal aspect, though that cannot be ignored, but even more so the public aspect of the question. Am I to be prevented from performing my duty and shouldering the responsibility which has been cast upon me, because someone does not like me or does not approve of my going to the Frontier?

2. That someone presumably is Sir Olaf Caroe, the Governor. It is patent that he disapproves of my being in charge of the External Affairs Department. Long before I took charge of this, he tried to prevent my doing so by approaching you on the subject. Subsequently on the eve of my visit to the Frontier, he tried to prevent my going there. The incidents that happened during my visit may have been subsequently advanced as proof of the undesirability of my visit. They led me to a contrary conclusion and made me realize how inefficient and out-of-date the Frontier administration was. This administration had created a legend about itself and about conditions in the Frontier, and it did not like anyone to interfere with this set-up. My experience during the past six months has convinced me that no substantial good can be done to the Frontier areas unless this set-up is changed.

3. I did not wish to raise this question till other and more vital matters had been settled. More especially I did not want to raise it at this stage on the eve of your departure from India. But this new development, which led to Sir Olaf Caroe objecting again to my visiting the Frontier, has compelled me to write. I must ask your forgiveness for this. I cannot continue to shoulder my present responsibilities if I am prevented from doing my work in this way. It is an extraordinary position. Almost anyone can go to Peshawar, but I must not do so, even for a brief and informal visit.

4. I had intended going to Peshawar chiefly because Dr Khan Sahib, the Prime Minister, wanted me to go there and see him. Immediately after receiving your message, I telephoned to him and he again said that he wanted me to come. He further informed me that the Governor thought differently and that he had an argument with him that day on the subject.

5. From this and many other instances it is clear that there is no cooperation between the Prime Minister and the Governor. Indeed there is distrust and lack of confidence in each other and the Frontier Ministry think that the Governor's weight is usually cast on the side opposed to them. This is a position which can only lead to trouble, as indeed it has already done.

6. I think the time has come when this matter must be faced squarely and a solution found. That solution should be the retirement of the Governor. Sir Olaf Caroe should, therefore, be requested to retire from his present office at an early date.

7. I do not expect any action from you in the matter on the eve of your departure. Nevertheless this is an urgent question and I cannot silently submit to it. I thought it fair, to you and the Governor, as well as to myself, to point out the urgency of a change in the Governorship.

8. If you so wish, a copy of this letter can be sent to Sir Olaf Caroe.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. Nehru's Demand for Removal of Governor

Extract from a Letter from Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 19 March 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, p. 991.

...4. The North-West Frontier Province agitation is being kept up, but Khan Sahib still offers a stout resistance. I think we are lucky that the disturbances have not been more serious on the Frontier. You have been kept informed by telegram. Nehru is making a grievance of the fact that I asked him not to visit Peshawar during his recent tour; and has proposed the removal of the Governor. I will send you his letter and my reply. It is possible that his accusations against the Governor may be stimulated by the fact that the judicial enquiry into the conduct of Mahbub Ali at Malakand during Nehru's visit last winter has, I understand, exonerated Mahbub Ali and reflected on the actions of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and to some extent on those of Dr Khan Sahib....

22. Resolutions Passed at a Jirga in Waziristan

Letter from Sher Bahadur Shah to M.A. Jinnah Forwarding These Resolutions,
 21 March 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 345-6.

TANK, WAZIRISTAN, D.I. KHAN

A joint *jirga* of the Waziristan Tribal Pathans (Wazir, Mahsud and Bhattani) was held in Spinkai, Raghzai, Waziristan on the 20th of March 1947. The prominent in the *jirga* were the following:

Faqir Sahib of Amakhel, Din Faqir
 Faqir Shahzada Sahib of Waziristan
 Faqir of Shewa, Waziristan
 Qazi Sahib Muhammad Arif of Sararogha
 Capt Mirbadshah
 Col Shah Pasand
 Malik Gulab Khan
 K.S. Qutab Khan
 K.S. Hayat Khan
 Hayat-Nazar Khel
 K.S. Hafta Khan
 M. Khaisor Khan

The following resolutions were unanimously passed:

- (1) It is our birthright to have Pakistan. The very intention of the Hindus to dominate Muslim India would be crushed. If we don't get our goal by political settlement, we would have it by bullet. We must have Pakistan whatever the consequences may be.
- (2) If Doctor Khan Sahib has a little sense in his head and if he is not a traitor to Pathans he should resign [along with] his Ministry and leave it to the Muslim League to form one. The present agitation in the Frontier has definitely proved that he is not a leader of the Pathans but a Hindu-hired agent. We, the Tribal Pathans, warn him that the situation in the Province would be far worse if he still remains in office.

- (3) We warn the Patel Committee on the rights of minorities and Tribal people, to step down in Delhi. The consequences would be very grave otherwise.

SHER BADSHAH KHAN MAHSUD

Lieut

Office Secretary,

Waziristan Muslim League,

Tank

Forwarded for information to:

1. All Provincial Muslim League Committees
2. Quaid-i-Azam M.A. Jinnah, Delhi
3. Khan Liaquat Ali Khan, Finance Member, Delhi
4. Khan Abdur Rab Khan Nishtar, Communications Member, Delhi
5. Viceroy of India, Delhi
6. Governor, NWFP, Peshawar
7. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, External Affairs Department, Delhi
8. Vallabhbhai Patel, Home Member, Delhi
9. Dr Khan Sahib, Premier, NWFP, Peshawar
10. Political Agent, South Waziristan, Tank
11. Pir Sahib of Manki Sharif, via Nowshera, Peshawar
12. Press.

C. ASSAM

1. Muslim League Condemns Atrocities in Assam

Report of API, 2 February 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 33/7/47, NAI.

For Press advice. No. 3

Karachi, 2 Feb.

(Second resolution) The Working Committee of the All India Muslim league strongly condemn the barbarous atrocities committed by the Congress government in Assam, on thousands of immigrants by forcible mass evictions of immigrants from the so-called professional grazing reserves and government waste land by demolishing their houses and driving them to wilderness rendering them homeless and destitute.

The working committee further record their emphatic condemnation of the inhuman practice resorted to by the government of Assam of selling by auction the paddy and the food crops of the immigrant cultivators, thereby depriving them of the fruits of month's of their sole means of subsistence, and exposing to starvation the families and children of the cultivators.

The working committee urge upon the government of Assam to put an immediate stop to these inhuman evictions and auction sales and allow settlement of government waste lands and excess land in the professional grazing reserves to those cultivators who have spent time and labour in reclaiming their waste lands, built their homesteads and sown crops there. It is a matter of great surprise to the working committee that the Assam government persist in its policy of oppression of the immigrant cultivators at a time when there is such acute food

shortage in India, necessitating appeal to foreign countries for relief from distress in this country and not utilising its own productive resources.—API

2. 'Assam League Starts Civil Disobedience'

12 March 1947

Report from *Pakistan Times* as cited in *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 451.

SHILLONG, 10 March: Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan, President of the Assam Provincial Muslim League, was today arrested at Tezpur, where an Order under Section 144 has since been imposed.

'Assam Day' called by a Joint Committee of Action of the Bengal and Assam Provincial Leagues to protest against the Government's eviction policy was observed all over the province.

A message from Nowgong said that the Assam League Working Committee which met here yesterday, decided to launch their Civil Disobedience Movement 'immediately' against the eviction policy of the Government. The Committee drew up a panel of 51 top-ranking League leaders of Assam, who will defy Section 144 and court arrest. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan headed the list. He left Tezpur to court arrest.

The Working Committee also asked the Muslim League Assembly party not to attend the forthcoming Assembly session.—API and OPI.

3. Report from Assam Province

Extract from the Assam Fortnightly Report for the First Half of March 1947, 18 March 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.

Political—With the preparations for the Budget session of the legislature on the 10th, there was little political activity except on the part of the Muslim League. It was reported that on release of the 19 detenus at Tezpur the hopes of local agitators had revived, but as the result of the success achieved by the League disobedience movement in the Punjab activity has intensified throughout the province, with rapidly increasing effect on the masses. A meeting in camera at Maulvi Bazar on the 20th February was commonly understood to have decided on a call for civil disobedience, and a meeting of the province working committee to be held at Nowgong on the 9th March was awaited in some general anxiety. Meanwhile Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan, MLA, had been busy organizing a training camp near Rahumari in Bengal, just over the provincial border from Mankachar, and a series of rural conferences. The extent of his success in working up excitement was at first not known, but it now emerges that the 'East Pakistan Conference' held at this place, which was christened 'Pakistan Kila', organized by Maulavi Abdul Kashem, MLA, and presided over by the Maulana, attracted some 10,000 people. The barrack for the training camp is big enough to accommodate 500 sleepers and a godown has been constructed in which food supplies, badges and the like are collected. At conference much play was made with the doctrine that the quarrel of the Muslims was with the British, and the President is reported to have stated that they should not fritter away their energy by killing Hindus. The eviction policy of the Assam Government was nevertheless bitterly criticized. An official report of this conference has not yet been secured from the Bengal Police.

Local anxiety awakened by reports of this meeting was greatly heightened when as the result of a secret meeting held at Dhubri on the 2nd and 3rd March it was bruited that a warning was to be given to the Assam Government that if evictions were not stayed within 15 days resistance would be offered, and decisions were reached to encourage evictees to re-encroach and to export goods to Bengal illegally. A climax was reached on the 8th when the Maulana disappeared, announcing to his immediate followers that he would surrender himself in Assam. On a rumour that he had been arrested at Dhubri the town was surrounded by a very threatening crowd, and it was with difficulty that they were convinced that no one knew where the Maulana was. Reinforcements were called for and sent, and the Deputy Inspector General of Police arrived in the early hours of the 10th. No actual trouble occurred in Dhubri, except a petty assault on a shop-keeper, but National Guards intimidated the Bar library to such an extent that the shop-keeper withdrew his case. Meanwhile the whole Hindu population of Mankachar fled to the Garo Hills in anticipation that the little town would be looted on the 10th, when 'Direct Action' was supposed to begin according to the schedule. A procession was led out in Dhubri on the 10th which was orderly, though the behaviour of the National Guards appeared provocative. The district authorities were considering the arrest of Maulavi Abdul Kashem, but early on the 10th were advised that if emissaries of the League were given facilities to proceed to Mankachar, where a demonstration was to take place, they could induce him to take such steps as would ensure the peace, and they decided to take chance of success through this manoeuvre. The result was striking. On proceeding later on the same day the Deputy Inspector General of Police found that a mob of no less than 25,000 people armed with stick and had assembled near Mankachar, but had been persuaded, partly through the efforts of the Deputy Commissioner of the Garo Hills, who had hastened to the place on hearing of the alarm, to abandon their weapons at the 'Pakistan Kila' and hold a peaceful procession. The refugees from Mankachar have since been persuaded to return. Two thirds of this large crowd were estimated to have come from neighbouring villages in Bengal.

Meanwhile, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan after attending the Working Committee meeting at Nowgong had journeyed privily by country boat and motor vehicle to Tezpur, where he was formally arrested during a meeting and taken off when it was over. The Muslim League Parliamentary Party, who are still formally abstaining from attendance at the Assembly on account of this arrest, have sent a delegation to interview him. Resistance was actually offered at the Kumolia Grazing Reserve, operations being stopped after the destruction of three or four houses owing to the perplexing conduct of the resisters, who held a succession of prayer meetings on the open land of the reserve. The Magistrate in charge was stopped on his way back to Tezpur with two National Guards who had been arrested after a minor clash with a police patrol party, and driven to arrest six more of the resisters, with whom he proceeded in his truck to headquarters.

The period thus closed with a distinctly adverse set of conditions, the leaders of the Muslim League having demonstrated their capacity to generate mass excitement on a definitely uncontrollable scale, the population of villages in neighbouring Bengal prepared—adequate funds and organization forthcoming—to conduct a series of *Jatha* movements to the distant areas of controversy in respect of land settlement, the Muslim leaders in other parts of Assam content to watch developments while making no distinction between the communal aspect of the matter and the economic problem set by landless immigrants from Bengal, the Muslim members of the legislature abstaining from attendance in the legislature or any other form

of constitutional action on the ground that civil liberties were (ostensibly) at stake, and the Government of Bengal, whose influence could not be disputed either on practical or on theoretic grounds, an incalculable. The most interesting feature is that the influence of genuine local Muslim interests in Assam, so far as they can be brought to bear on events in practice, is still in favour of peaceful settlement of all differences. At meetings of the Muslim League held elsewhere in Assam, there appears to be less pretence at making of the British Government the bug-bear.

Muslim shops at Shillong held hartal on the 10th; on the 11th a procession was taken out, during which Hindu owned shops were closed. The public meeting organized at the meeting of the Muslim League Working Committee at Nowgong was attended by a crowd of 2,000, and a procession of about 1,000 persons was held.

On his way back to Shillong the Deputy Inspector General of Police was involved in trouble which arose over the arrest at Gauhati of Maulavi Saleh Ahmed of the Darrang Muslim League Committee, on a request from Tezpur. A crowd assembled which was so large, vocal and intransigent that the prisoner and escort were only enabled to proceed peacefully after a delay of some hours.

A report has been received from an unofficial source of the reaction at Silchar to the call for 'Direct Action', namely, the hasty consummation of a desire to haul down the Union Jack over the court of the Deputy Commissioner and its replacement by the League flag....

4. Muslim League Charged with Carrying Out Sinister Activities

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Wavell, 20 March 1947

SPC, Vol. V, pp. 9–10.

New Delhi

Dear Lord Wavell,

I am sending herewith a copy of a telegram which I have received from the Assam Premier regarding the situation in that province as a result of the activities of the Muslim League both there and in the neighbouring province of Bengal.

2. I am sorry to trouble you with this almost on the eve of your departure, but I feel that the position is such as cannot be allowed to rest where it is without peril to public safety in Assam. It seems to me anomalous that a party the representatives of which are in the Central Government should indulge in unlawful activities in a province. In the absence of any restraining influence of these representatives on the provincial leaders, the position of our Ministries becomes weakened for assistance from the Centre cannot obviously be as full and effective as circumstances demand while that of agitators becomes stronger for want of sufficiently resolute action. You will recall that in November last when Abell wrote to me on the subject I pointed out that what the Assam Government was doing was in defence of their lawful claims in their own lands and that it was for you to persuade the Muslim League to pursue a different course from that of forcibly securing their unlawful object. What has happened in the Punjab and what is happening in the NWFP should convince you that the so-called non-violent agitation is merely a cover for more sinister activities and designs and that the aim quite clearly is to cause a severe shock to law and order with a view to forcing the provincial Government or Governments to surrender to the League's unlawful demands.

3. In these circumstances, the duty of the Central Government is quite clear and we must give the provincial Government such timely and effective military aid as may be necessary. I am therefore requesting the Defence Member to see what can be done to meet the Assam Premier's appeal and hope that you will give all possible support to the Assam Premier in his efforts to deal with a difficult and potentially dangerous situation.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

TELEGRAM

Shillong,
19 March 1947

Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ASSAM SITUATION SERIOUS CAUSING GOVERNMENT GREAT ANXIETY. ASSAM MUSLIM LEAGUE AND BENGAL MUSLIM LEADERS PLANNING INVASION ASSAM BY ORGANIZED VOLUNTEERS FROM BENGAL. SINCE 20 FEBRUARY LARGE CONCENTRATION OF MEN IN BENGAL BORDERS WITH SPEARS AND LATHIS NEAR DHUBRI SUBDIVISION HAVE ERECTED SHEDS FOR TRAINING VOLUNTEERS. MANY PREDOMINANTLY MUSUM AREAS IN ASSAM ALREADY INFLTRATED EXCITING PEOPLE TO VIOLENCE AND CREATING DISAFFCTION AGAINST GOVERNMENT. ASSAM MUSLIM LEAGUE DECLARED CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND ARE HAVING FREQUENT PROCESSIONS. CLASH INEVITABLE AS TENSION CONTINUES. ASSAM GOVERMENT'S ARMED STRENGTH NOW POSTED [IN] SMALL DANGER AREAS QUITE INADEQUATE MEET SITUATION. PRAY POST AT LEAST A BRIGADE HERE IMMEDIATELY AS ORIGINALLY INTENDED AND DIRECT PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT USING THEM WHEN REQUIRED FOR BMERGBNCY. LETTER FOLLOWS.

PREMIER ASSAM

5. Supporting Provincial Ministries with Military Aid

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Baldev Singh, 20 March 1947
SPC, Vol. V, p. 11.

My dear Baldev Singh,

I am sending herewith a copy of a telegram (see enclosure with No.13) which I have received from the Premier of Assam. You will recall that last November the Premier protested against the transfer of some military units from Assam and expressed the view that the situation in the province demanded the presence of those troops. The position now, as you must have gathered from the papers and from intelligence reports, is quite critical. There is a definite attempt on the part of the League, both in Assam and in Bengal, to compel the Government of Assam by force to yield to the League's unlawful demands on the question of eviction of trespassers from Government reserves. It is quite clear that this challenge has to be met by the provincial Government if it is to uphold its claim of being a responsible authority. As it is, our position in supporting provincial Ministries is considerably handicapped by the anomaly that we have in the Interim Government at the Centre representatives of the organization which is indulging in unlawful activities in the provinces. Therefore, if we are wanting in giving timely and effective

aid to the Assam Premier in his attempts to deal with a most difficult and potentially dangerous situation, we would be placing the security of the province in serious jeopardy.

2. I do hope, therefore, that in these circumstances you will see your way to meeting the Assam Premier's request. I myself feel that the immediate strengthening of the military force in the area will have a salutary effect on the agitators.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

6. Tribals Need Protection from Immigrants' Encroachment

Extract from a Report in *Axomiya* (Weekly), 22 March 1947.

Finance Minister Bishnuram Midhi exhorted all the Hindus, Muslims, tribals and immigrants coming before 1938 to be united against a possible outside attack on Assam.

In response to the question of the harassment of the tribal people due to land encroachment by the immigrants, Midhi explained the land-settlement policy of the Government. The Government would protect the tribal people at any cost and would not transfer the areas bordering tribal areas to immigrants. The tribal leader Rupnath Brahma requested the Government to continue the Line System and to adopt measures to protect tribal people from attack by the immigrants.

In a public meeting held on 17 March, the government was requested to declare the Muslim League as illegal in the context of a possible attack on Assam instigated by it.

7. Differences within League

Extract from a Report in *Axomiya* (Weekly), 22 March 1947.

Differences emerged within the Assam Provincial Muslim League due to the interference of Bengal Muslim League. League Assembly Party led by Saadullah supported cooperation with Bordoloi and opposed the civil-disobedience movement in Assam. But the majority fraction supported civil disobedience in line with Punjab and Frontier provinces. As a shrewd parliamentarian, Saadullah opposed any illegal activities. He expressed grief over the part that his co-Leaguers had sought help from outside. He pointed out that they could not dissolve the present ministry through this movement and that the eviction policy which it has now criticized was earlier supported by the League. He was also against Maulana Bhasani and his illegal activities.

8. Opposition to Muslim League

Extract from an Editorial in *Axomiya* (Weekly), 22 March 1947

There is intense opposition to the evil designs of the Muslim League in Assam. In Goalpara, Mankachar, and other places, non-Muslims had fled in fear of Muslim League activities. On 10 March they led an armed procession in which 40,000 people participated. Communal riots

may occur in the ensuing future and the situation has worsened due to continued influx of Muslim immigrants and the instigation by the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. The Muslim League activists deny that they are Indian citizens. Those who have tried to submerge the identity of Assam in Bengal have no right to come to Assam or stay here. All-Indian identity and provincial autonomy are not opposite but complementary to each other.

Chapter 8. Communalism: Provinces

A. BENGAL

1. Plea for Tolerance

M.K. Gandhi's Speech at a Prayer Meeting at Masimpur, 7 January 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 323-4.

Gandhiji said that some Muslims had left the prayer ground. On enquiry he had come to learn that they had left because Ramdhun was being sung. He was glad that it occurred on the very first day of his pilgrimage. It was a matter for deep regret that his Muslim friends should have been upset at the singing of Ramdhun. It indicated the nature of obstacles that must be faced and overcome if the country was to make progress. The nature of propaganda carried on here has been such that the Muslims could not even bear to hear Ramdhun sung by Hindu devotees. I am sorry because some of my friends had not been able to bear any name of God except Khuda but I am glad because they have had the courage of expressing their dissent openly and plainly. This small incident probably gives an inkling of the mentality which had prevailed during the fateful October disturbances in the district. I am extremely careful not to wound the susceptibilities of anyone unnecessarily. It is essential that my Muslim brethren should realize as also the Hindus that it does not matter by what name God is addressed. It is the same Creator whom people worship through many tongues. I appeal to the Muslim brethren to assure me of that freedom which is true to the noblest traditions of Islam. Even from the Muslim League platforms it has been repeatedly said that in Pakistan there will be full tolerance of the practice of their faiths by the minorities and that they will enjoy freedom of worship equally with the majority.

Gandhiji observed that Pakistan did not and could not mean that Hindus in Bengal and Sind should give up their religion and follow the practice of the majority community in order not to rouse the latter's displeasure. God could be approached through namaz as well as Ramdhun and there could not be a quarrel among branches of the same tree.

Gandhiji said that there was nothing to quarrel over the Hindus, Muslims and Christians. When Gandhiji started from Chandipur, it was proposed that all through his way Ramdhun would be sung. But he thought better of it lest it displeased the Muslims. Although Ramdhun was very dear to him he did not like the idea that his Muslim brothers should think their Hindu brothers to be so arrogant as to march singing Ramdhun because of Gandhiji's presence.

Gandhiji added that he had been very careful in his speeches and deeds not to offend his Muslim brethren. He would desist from anything that displaced their sentiments or offended their religion. But he could never give up his Ramdhun which brought him so much mental

peace. He had come to Noakhali to serve all communities, to help them to live together peacefully and in healthy atmosphere. Every day during prayer, he not only recited from the Bhagavad Gita but also from the Koran, and religious differences simply did not exist for him. He had come to Noakhali, Gandhiji said, to serve Hindus and Muslims alike. But he would be helpless if Muslims wanted him to forgo the name of his God in exchange. As he did not like to parade his religion, so also he could not forgo his religious belief. It was the unity of God and religion that he had come to preach. He could not give it up, Gandhiji said, so long as he lived.

Concluding, Gandhiji pleaded for tolerance from the majority community and urged and minority community not to give up reciting Ramdhun in all humility and without any feeling of hostility towards others. With proper understanding of each other's religion, Gandhiji said, Muslim progress would be repaid and certain.

2. Report from Bengal Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report for Bengal for the Second Half of January 1947,
4 February 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/1/47, NAI.

COMMUNAL

The situation has outwardly continued to improve though the Punjab incidents have undoubtedly stirred Muslim feeling and any incident is sufficient to destroy the present calm. The Swaraswati Puja has passed off without incident except in Saidpur.

The communal trouble in Saidpur started when a Swaraswati Puja procession was passing a mosque and was obstructed by some Muslims. The resulting riot was dispersed by a lathi charge but after night-fall arson and murder took place. On the next day some five thousand Muslims from the surrounding villages attempted to enter the town thinking that the Muslims were being murdered and the police was compelled to open fire resulting in the eventual death of some five Muslims. In addition to the fatalities from police firing there have been 15 deaths reported as a result of the communal clashes. Train services were dislocated on the 28th and 29th and for the next few days there was considerable tension. The situation has now improved but is not yet considered to be normal. Police reinforcements were moved to the site from Rajshahi as well as from the Presidency Range.

There has been no serious incident in west or central Bengal. In Dacca city, too, there has been no incident but persons are still reluctant to go through quarters of the town predominantly inhabited by members of the other community.

In Chittagong Division there has been a definite improvement in the general situation. In Noakhali the general improvement has been maintained and refugees continue to return to their homes. There have, however, been instances of returned refugees being threatened by the local Muslims and in the Dattapara areas some returned Hindus have returned to the refugee centres. The question of the departure of the troops from the district is being considered in the light of recent developments. In Tippera the communal situation has greatly improved and the repatriation of refugees is going on satisfactorily....



3. Communal Disturbances at Saidpur in Rangpur District

Letter from Kalipada Mukherjee to J.B. Kripalani Enclosing a Report, 6 February 1947

AICC Papers, File No. CL-8/1946, NMML.

Bengal Provincial Congress Committee

115-E, Dharamtala Street
Calcutta.

Acharya Kripalani,
President, Indian National Congress,
New Delhi.

Dear Acharya Kripalani,

I am enclosing herewith a report of the recent communal disturbances at Saidpur, the district of Rangpur in connection with Saraswati immersion ceremony on the 28th January and on subsequent days. The incident started on the 28th January when the Saraswati images were taken out in a procession for immersion. As the procession was passing in front of a Mosque in the presence of the SDO and a posse of Police forces, brickbats were hurled. As a result of which some images were broken. It created great resentment among the processionists and other Hindu inhabitants of the locality. The SDO who was regulating the procession bungled and mismanaged the whole thing by stopping the procession in front of the Mosque in order to examine whether the police license had actually been taken out for each individual image. This created some resentment and there was exchange of hot words between the SDO and the Hindu leaders in charge of these processions. Mr Saradendu Chatterjee, President, Saidpur Congress Committee and Sri Bejoy C. Moitra, a local Pleader and a prominent Congress leader interviewed and sought to bring about a compromise. The SDO was prevailed upon to allow the procession pass without any late [*sic*] or hindrance. When almost half the procession has passed the Mosque, some Moslem youths rushed from a neighbouring Moslem hotel and pushed down the images passing at that moment. Simultaneously brickbats were thrown from the roof of the Mosque and some other images were broken and the procession receded in north and south in two parts. The infuriated Hindu processionists then chased the Moslem miscreants and fracas ensued. Some men were assaulted, shops looted and burnt and the whole town was in state of mad frenzy. Presently news came from Khalari Mahalla (a predominantly Moslem area) that some Moslems of the Mahalla escaped from office in duty hours and joining a number of Moslems of Bihar refugees massacred a number of Hindus, some living in Railway quarters and others in private houses. The bodies of the unfortunate Hindu victims were being thrown into a well. Incendiarism and plunder of Hindu property started. During the time the Hindu Employees who were residents of that Mohalla realizing what were happening outside continually appealed to the Works Manager of B.A. Railway Workshop at Saidpur for their immediate release so that they might be of some help to their wives and children marooned by the Moslem hooligans. But the Works Manager, Khan Bahadur A.H. Khan, a reputed League leader refused to grant them leave on the plea that it would create further mischief. At about 5 o'clock when the Factory gates were opened the Factory workers were allowed to go back to their respective houses. But on their way back they were attacked by Moslem hooligans, when some of them were overpowered and killed. A pocket of Hindus isolated at a spot known

as Number 9 offered resistance to the continuous attack by a band of armed hooligans of the Mohalla and hundreds of Bihar refugees (Moslem).

The District Magistrate (Khan Bahadur Ishaque) arrived at night and went to Khalasi Mohalla to visit the affected areas but the first action he took the following morning was to put three Hindu leading men—Sri Chunilal Dhar, Rambishnu Sinha and Kalanya Goala under arrest. On the 29th we received alarming message from Saidpur describing the tragedy and immediately on receipt of that wire and trunk message, we despatched volunteers from here to the affected areas at Saidpur and the local congress leaders from Rangpur, Raibandha, Nilphamari hurried to the spot with a view to organizing relief and rescue work. We also contacted acting Chief Minister on the 29th afternoon and apprised him of the grim situation prevailing in Saidpur and I was surprised to learn that the Govt had not received any official report regarding the incident from the District Magistrate concerned. Anyway, the Acting Chief Minister agreed to take immediate action in the matter and to despatch armed forces to the places of occurrence at Saidpur.

Up to 30th morning about 26 dead bodies are reported to have been recovered including 6 believed to have died of gunshot wounds. It is apprehended that some dead bodies are still lying in a decomposed condition in some wells in Khalasi Mahalla near Saidpur Bazar. The Dist Magistrate and the SDO Nilphamari although they were present in the scene since 28th night failed to give adequate protection to the Hindu minority as a result of which there was a huge exodus of Hindu population from these affected areas and the neighbouring villages. We sought to impress upon the Govt as well as the Moslem League leaders the necessity of starting joint Peace Squad for the purpose of rehabilitating public confidence and morale which has been greatly shaken as a result of recent communal disturbances and seeming indifference on the part of the local authority. From the reports of local Congress leaders and the relief workers engaged in rescue and rehabilitation work in Saidpur area it is evident that the situation is still very tense owing to the threatening attitude of the Moslem villagers who are just waiting for the withdrawal of armed police to carry on their policy of further depredation amongst the Hindu inhabitants. This tension and panic are still continuing although the situation apparently seems to have improved owing to the intervention of the armed police.

Yours sincerely,
Kalipada Mukherji
SECRETARY.

Copy to Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and
General Secy, AICC, Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad.

4. 'Bengal Censure Moves Fail'

The Times of India, 7 February 1947.

Premier Denies Muslim Uprising in Noakhali

Calcutta, 6 February.

Both the Bengal Legislative Assembly and the Bengal Council today rejected adjournment motions brought forward by Congress members to censure the Bengal Government on their 'failure to prevent the disturbances in Noakhali and Tippera and to take prompt measures to check them'.

Several hundred Muslim students, shouting slogans demanding the removal of Mr Gandhi from Noakhali, the election of Mr A.K. Fazlul Huq as President of the Provincial League and the abolition of Zamindari, tried to force their way into the Assembly chamber. The police made a *lathi* charge and arrested 136 students who were, however, released later, with the exception of nine who were released on bail.

In the Assembly, the motion was defeated by 107 votes to 74, the European group remaining neutral. The Communist Party in the Assembly voted with the Opposition, while the Anglo-Indian members left the chamber before the division.

In the Council, the motion was defeated by 23 votes to 15.

Replying to the debate in the Council, the Chief Minister, Mr H.S. Suhrawardy, gave the first official figures of the disturbances in East Bengal, which disclosed that a total of 182 persons were killed and 69 injured in both the districts.

Mr Suhrawardy gave the following list:

	Noakhali	Tippera
Number of villages affected	248	178
Persons killed	145	37
Persons injured	19	50
	(including 30 Muslims)	
Abductions	10	Nil
Forcible marriages	2	Nil

Women criminally assaulted—No specific information.

Terrible Atrocities

In the Bengal Council, the mover of the adjournment motion, Mr Nagendra Mahalanobis, referred to the 'terrible atrocities' committed on the minority community in these two districts in October and November last by well organized bands of hooligans under a premeditated plan.

About a dozen speakers, belonging to different parties, took part in the debate.

Winding up the debate, Mr Suhrawardy said that, compared to what had happened in other provinces, the incidents in Noakhali and Tippera paled into insignificance.

Referring to Mr Gandhi's presence in Noakhali, Mr Suhrawardy said Mr Gandhi's object was to restore confidence among the Hindus and he was advising the Hindus to go back to their villages. That was also the policy of the Bengal Government. During his visit to Noakhali, said the Premier, he had found that the Muslims were unanimous in wanting the Hindus to come back. They also guaranteed their security.

While, however, Government were making arrangements for the Hindus to go back, a number of persons, who posed as volunteers, were telling them not to do so.

'I emphatically deny that there was a general uprising,' the Premier maintained. If it had been a general uprising of the Muslims, the extent of the damage would have been much greater, he added. The incidents in Noakhali and Tippera, in Mr Suhrawardy's opinion, 'pale into insignificance before what occurred in other provinces. That speaks volumes for the Muslim League and the Muslim people of Noakhali.'

The Chief Minister also said that the huge figure of 5,000 deaths given by the President of the Bengal Congress was, in his opinion, responsible for what had happened to Bihar.

Before the Chief Minister had concluded his speech, closure was applied and the motion was voted upon and rejected.

5. State of Hindu-Muslim Relations

Gandhi's Speech at Prayer Meeting, 8 February 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 446-67.

NANDIGRAM

Q. The Mussalmans are boycotting the Hindus. Those Hindus who possess more land than they can till themselves are in a serious difficulty. What is your advice to them? What will they do about the surplus land which they hold but cannot till themselves, even if they take up the plough themselves?

A. In answer Gandhiji said that he had heard of the boycott and had made some remarks at previous meetings. He hoped, indeed he knew, that the boycott was not universal in Noakhali. It was probably confined to a few. Whatever the extent, he had no doubt that it was wrong and would do no good to the boycotters as it could not to those against whom it was directed. That opinion was held by him for a large number of years, say sixty. But there was a condition in which he would conceive it possible, that is, if the Muslims regarded the Hindus as their enemies and wished to avoid their presence in Noakhali. That would amount to a declaration of war from which every Indian would recoil with horror. In isolated cases, his opinion was emphatic. The Hindu under the boycott would allow his land to lie fallow like the Australians or he would sell the surplus land. What was best was that nobody should possess more than he could himself use. That was the ideal the society should strive to reach.

Q. You have been working here for the last three months. Has there been any appreciable change in the mentality of the Hindus?

A. The question could best be answered by the Hindus concerned. He flattered himself with the belief that the Hindus had, at least for the time being, shed their cowardice to an extent.

Q. There is certainly a peace-loving section among the Mussalmans. After your presence in their midst, have they been influenced to such an extent that they are able to assert themselves against the worse element in their own community?

A. As to this third question he was glad that the questioner admitted that there was a peace-loving section among the Muslims of Noakhali. It would be monstrous if there was not. Whether they had developed courage to oppose the bad and mischievous element in Muslim society, he would give the same answer that he gave to the second question. The Muslim friends could reply with certainty. But he was vain enough to believe that several Muslim friends had been so affected. As for instance, the Muslim witnesses in Bhatialpur declared that the destroyed *mandir* he had opened they would defend against destruction in future with their lives. There were other consoling instances he had met with during his tour...



6. 'With Gandhi in Noakhali'

Extract from Report by Phillips Talbot, 16 February 1947

Phillips Talbot, *An American Witness to India's Partition*, New Delhi: Sage Publishers, 2007, pp. 200–12.

22 Ferozshah Road (Rear)
New Delhi, India

TWO WEEKS AGO I traveled for five days in order to walk for an hour with Gandhi.

The journey was worth the effort. It was revealing to watch Gandhi throwing himself during this critical season into the remoteness of East Bengal's Noakhali district for a barefooted village-to-village pilgrimage in search of Hindu–Muslim amity. Here was a 77-year-old ascetic, rising above the physical ordeal, immersed in a peculiarly Indian approach to the cleavage that threatens the country. His quest had both a political and a religious appeal. After feeling the atmosphere around him and watching his pilgrim's progress, I came away convinced that the aging leader is clinching his place in the Hindu pantheon. Whether he will achieve equal political results in this manner will be examined later in this letter.

In New Delhi one hears sharply divergent views on Gandhi's latest enterprise, which he set upon while his disciples here were making rough passage on the political seas. *Dawn*, the Muslim League daily, quickly diagnosed the mission as a flop. Pointing out that Muslim visitors had walked away from Gandhi's prayer meeting, *Dawn* scolded Gandhi for grouping Quranic quotations with readings from other scriptures, and its views were echoed by Muslims whom I know. (Gandhi answered *Dawn's* complaint about an un-believer's commenting on the Quran by referring to Quranic judgments handed down by the unbelieving British Privy Council.)

In contrast to Muslim reactions, several intelligent Hindus warned me against underestimating the Gandhi March. One called it the most significant mission of Gandhi's life. Others agreed that its impact might be slow to appear, but predicted that it would be deep and long-lasting. The reactions of many foreigners and some Indians were less complex. They regarded the aging leader's absence from today's political arena as a demonstration of weakness or caprice. 'He's dotty,' was the simple expression of one official.

The region in which Gandhi has secluded himself is deep in the Ganges–Brahmaputra delta, one of the least accessible flatlands of India. To reach his party, I traveled by air, rail, steamer, and bicycle, and on foot. The flight from here to Calcutta used up one day. The second morning I crossed the fields of central Bengal by train, and at noon reached the junction of the Ganges and Brahmaputra. An ancient side-wheeler (one of a fleet of paddle boats that range in age from 20 to 80 years) bent its way for the rest of the day down the, broad, winding river to a stop called Chandpur, where I spent most of the night in a waiting-room chair. In the early hours, I left on meter-gauge train for a small delta land station named Chitosi Road. There the bicycle that I had carted from Calcutta came into use. Tying my bedding roll on the luggage carrier and my typewriter and briefcase in the basket, I set off just as the sun rose. The 'road' for which the station was named turned out to be an earth *bund* about 10 feet broad and rising 10 feet above the surrounding fields. The object of startled stares from Bengali peasants whose language I do not know, I steered along the single footpath that cuts its grass surface. But for me, everyone within sight was walking. Fortunately they all pointed in the same direction for the village whose name I shouted. I couldn't ride the whole distance. Once a hand-poled ferry carried me across a rather large stream. Frequently cross-ditches which broke the *bund* forced

me to dismount, wheel the vehicle down the side to the field level, hoist it across the ditch, and push it up the other side onto the bund. One willing peasant carried the loaded cycle across a running stream that I waded. After about 10 miles I could cycle no farther. Then, leaving the machine at a medical relief center (which is operated by Communist party workers with government assistance grants), I set off across the fields on foot. In the three mile walk we crossed several streams on bridges that were constructed by laying one or two bamboo poles along the fork made by supporting cross-poles. We managed well except when a log that had been thrown across a brook snapped under my ample bulk, dropping me neatly into the water.

Hardly a wheel turns in this teeming, jute- and rice-growing delta. I saw no motorable road. The bullock cart, one of India's truest symbols, does not exist here. The civilization is amphibious, as fields are always flooded between April and October. In the wet season little remains above water except occasional ribbons of *bund* and isolated village clumps marked by coconut palms, bamboos, and betel trees. People stay at home or, at best, move about in hand-hewn skiffs. Though some of their crops grow under water, they farm mostly in the winter dry season. Here, in an entirely rural area about 40 miles square, are jammed nearly two and a half million people: 1,400 per square mile or more than two per acre. (I wonder what Illinois farmer could feed, clothe and house 90 people on the yield from the south forty.) Eighty percent of these peasants are Muslims. Apart from a few wealthy families they, 'have nothing but their numbers,' in the words of one senior Muslim official. Impoverished cultivators racially indistinguishable from their Hindu neighbors, they suffered severely in the 1943 Bengal famine. Many watched their relatives die while, as is frequently the case, hunger put profit into black-marketing. The tiny Hindu minority in this region is divided into two groups, of whom the more numerous are also peasants and low-caste village artisans. With the upper crust of landlords, moneylenders, grain merchants, and lawyers, peasants of both communities had shared little sympathy for many years past, I judged.

In this closely packed, rupee-starved, isolated district terror struck last fall in the wake of vicious riots in Calcutta and other Indian cities. It was the first real flare-up in a rural area. Roving bands paddled over the flooded fields from village to village, killing Hindus, looting and burning their property, abducting some women, and registering conversions from Hinduism to Islam. Many of those murdered and robbed were the wealthy who had incurred the peasants' ire in 1943. The movement took a communal twist, however, from politicians (since disowned by the Muslim League) who led the village crowds with the cry of Pakistan. In some villages mobs burned huts even of outcasts.

Frightened and unable to run away because of the floods, many Hindu households sought safety by professing Islam. Their tormentors sometimes sealed the 'conversion' by putting Muslim caps and wrap-around *lungis* on them, feeding them beef, and in at least two verified cases conducting marriages between new converts and established Muslims.

The upheaval, in which the president of the district bar association and a well-known landlord were among those killed, swept over about half the district. Perhaps a million people were caught up in the turmoil and refugees eventually were counted in tens of thousands. This was bad enough. But the effect was multiplied a thousand fold across the breadth of Hindu India by exaggerated, inflammatory reports of what had occurred. The Bengal Congress Committee's president told the press that 5,000 innocent Hindus had been slaughtered. J.B. Kripalani, president-elect of the National Congress, visited the area and returned describing the tragedy as 'worse than the 1943 famine that took 3 million lives.' Avoiding a direct estimate of murders,

he justified his conclusion with the assertion that 'if all the people forcibly converted and all the women abducted and forcibly married had been done to death, in my opinion, that would have been a lesser tragedy than their yielding to force.'

These statements, which were prominently published all over the country, may be compared with final casualty and loss figures agreed to by the Bengal (Muslim League) government, the British governor and his staff, and the military authorities in the area, both British and Indian. They have now reported that the total number of people killed in the uprising was not more than 200. Two cases of abduction and marriage were proved. Of the conversions which were unquestionably on a large scale among low-caste or outcaste Hindus in the region, only isolated individuals had held to the new faith.

It might be added, *inter alia*, that these reports must have contributed to the uprising of Hindu peasants in Bihar province during the following weeks, when it is established that the number of Muslims killed ran into thousands.

This was the pitch of feeling in India when Gandhi decided to go to East Bengal himself. A few days before he left Delhi Mildred and I walked with him for half an hour in the sweepers' settlement where he stayed and talked of the wave of mass fratricide which was then rolling over the country. Although he denied letting emotions affect his judgment, we sensed a feeling of frustration, if not of failure. This had nothing to do with the validity of the creed of nonviolence itself. Its truth, he repeated, could never be challenged. But he could not be happy with the way in which his teachings were being flouted.

To test the applicability of his faith, therefore, he went to the heart of the trouble. He chose East Bengal, and when people asked why he had not gone to Bihar province where the damage was greater and the culprits were Hindus, he replied that the people of Bihar had repented. Besides, he said, he could control the government and people of Bihar from Noakhali, but had no special powers over the people of Noakhali. In a tiny village that suddenly acquired fame, bustling visitors, police attendants, press observers and even telegraph facilities, the old man settled into a hut and began meeting people, hearing their stories, and assessing the task ahead of him. Finally, early in January, he began the trek that will take its place in the Gandhi epic as the East Bengal March. By now he has established a routine. Rising at four, he finishes his morning prayers, takes a glass of hot water containing honey, and works at correspondence for two hours or so until dawn. At 7:30 he sets off on the day's walk across newly plowed dew-soaked fields to the next village on his itinerary.

The Gandhi march is an astonishing sight. With a staff in one hand and the other on his granddaughter's shoulder, the old man briskly takes the lead as the sun breaks over the horizon. He usually wraps himself in a hand-woven shawl, as the January mornings are cold enough for him to see his breath. But he walks barefooted despite chilblains. This is a fashion he started in order to relieve a blister, but continued because he liked the idea of walking as Indian pilgrims normally travel. Clustered about him is his immediate party: his Bengali interpreter, a professor of geography at Calcutta University; a Sikh attendant who fawns as much as Gandhi will permit; a retired engineer-turned-swami; and one or two youths. The dozen Indian pressmen who are following this trek walk behind. Sometimes this little body of the faithful, like other truth-seekers before them, sing of God as they walk. His name here is Ram. A squad of policemen, detailed (against repeated protests from Gandhi) by Muslim League premier H.S. Suhrawardy to accompany and protect the Gandhi party, mix with the group. As the sun begins to climb, villagers from places along the way join the trek. They

come by twos and fours or by dozens and scores, swelling the crowd as the snows swell India's rivers in spring. They press in on the old man, while their children dance around the edges of the moving body. Here, if I ever saw one, is a pilgrimage. Here is the Indian—and the world's?—idea of sainthood: a little old man who has renounced personal possessions, walking with bare feet on the cold earth in search of a great human ideal. Sometimes a new arrival drops to the ground in front of Gandhi in an effort to touch those feet, but the big Sikh gently lifts up the man. As Gandhi nears the day's destination, another crowd from that village surges toward him, singing their own hymns, waiting to greet and welcome him. They lead him to his new hut, where three or four peasant women give him the special Bengal greeting, a high, warbling trill that I have heard nowhere else.

This is the Gandhi march, one of two highlights of the Mahatma's day and the act that has caught the imagination of many co-nationalists, and particularly co-religionists. After arriving at the new village, Gandhi rests while his granddaughter bathes his feet. He meets his hosts. Then, at 9:30 he gets a massage and bath, and at 11 he takes a meagre lunch which is usually a boiled paste of scraped and ground vegetables, moistened with a glassful of hot milk. After another rest (during which he indulges himself in his widely known 'nature cure' consisting of mud plasters on his forehead and stomach), Gandhi works at correspondence and interviews until the time for evening prayers.

In his daily prayer meeting Gandhi meets the world; this is his best platform. Welcoming all who will come to his open-air meeting, he proceeds through a ritual that reveals his eclectic faith. One by one, the audience hears an extract from Buddhist scriptures (suggested by a Japanese monk who stayed at Gandhi's ashram until he was interned at Pearl Harbor); several recitations from revered Hindu writings; ashramite vows (truth, nonviolence, nonstealing, celibacy, non possession, removal of untouchability, and others); readings from the Quran; a Zend Avesta (Zoroastrian) quotation; a hymn which may be Hindi, Bengali, or some Christian song in translation; and a joyous tuneful recital of the name of Ram, to the accompaniment in cadence of hand-clapping. This devotional exercise is followed each day by a talk in which Gandhi gives expression to almost any thought exercising his mind. Listeners may hear of village sanitation, women in purdah, Hindu-Muslim relations, reactions to the latest Muslim League resolution, a hint as to what new course the Congress will adopt, and observations on London's policy. Taken together, reports of these after-prayer talks furnish perhaps the best guide to the trend of Gandhian thought. These reports, I might add, are authentic. While his Bengali interpreter translates his remarks to the village crowd, Gandhi sits crosslegged on his small platform, penning out the authorized English version of what he has said in Hindi. He writes in third person and refers to himself by his initial. 'Addressing the prayer gathering at Bansa this evening, G. said....'

After the prayers, Gandhi takes another brisk walk. Except on his weekly day of silence, he uses this exercise period to talk with villagers and visitors who half-trot at his side. Then Gandhi returns to his hut for another footbath and more correspondence and interviews. Later one of the Indian pressmen arrives to read the day's news to him. Gandhi usually sleeps at about 9 o'clock.

A word might be added about these newspaper reporters. Many of them have been with Gandhi for long periods and regard him with an affectionate and familiar, though reverential, air. Tending their aches and pains, scolding them for their little luxuries (three blankets instead of two), he makes them feel part of the family. Most of them would be incapable, I think, of giving

him a bad press. They are Indians, and he is India. Yet they are sufficiently human to protest at the need to lay their bedding rolls side by side on earth floors of peasant huts just because he sleeps simply. City youths, they find it distasteful to go through three or four villages in a row without finding pond water clean enough for a bath. Least of all do they like the frostiness of mat huts in January. Yet, clinging to the old man, they find material for daily dispatches and hammer them out on typewriters set up on pillows. As their joint runner must go miles to the nearest telegraph office, they turn out their stories just after finishing the morning march; almost daily, they lead off with Gandhi's comments at the previous day's prayer meeting.

Gandhi's decision to bury himself in this nearly unreachable corner of India at a critical hour in India's destiny distresses even some of his closest associates. Speaking for them, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to Gandhi a few weeks ago in this vein: One hardly knows what to say to you. You are needed in Noakhali, but you are also needed in Delhi, in Wardha, and everywhere.

Twice the non-ascetic Congress leadership has found need to refer crucial issues to East Bengal and wait days for replies. During the December crisis, when the party's high command could not agree whether to bow to London's interpretation of the Cabinet Delegation's constitution-making scheme or to disavow it and carry the fight to the country, Nehru and Congress President Kripalani had to fly to Bengal and seek out Gandhi in his remote village to reach conclusion. Now again, when the Congress is pressing Whitehall to eject Muslim League members from the interim government, it looks as if new direct conversations may become necessary at any moment. Wherever he may be, Gandhi remains the high priest of Congress policy. And Congress policy needs more far-seeing, shrewd control at this transitional moment than ever before.

Yet in the opinion of his associates nothing in the outside world will draw Gandhi from his immersion in rural East Bengal so long as he feels his task there unfinished. They know of course, that many people fail to understand why he stays there.

Two answers may be suggested. Politically, Gandhi has concluded that Hindu-Muslim bitterness threatens to postpone Indian freedom, and perhaps undercuts the role India might otherwise play in Asia. Having failed to bring the two communities together through high-level negotiation, he is testing his nonviolence and seeking a solution at the familiar village level. As a Hindu, moreover, he is incapable of ignoring the threat to his culture that arises from forced conversions. Wherever they occur, he must stamp them out.

The first objective, obviously, can be attained only by winning the support of Muslims. Gandhi has consciously set out to do this. As the primary step, he is working to lift Hindu-Muslim relations from a religious to a political plane.

Time after time, Gandhi has told Bengali prayer audiences that Hindus and Muslims must settle their dispute or continue to be saddled with foreign rule. He seems to expect an early end of domination by war-weakened Britain, but to fear genuinely that internal dissension might open the door to some other agent of foreign imperialism, perhaps in the guise of a UNO trusteeship. Gandhi assures his listeners that freedom is theirs to grasp, if they will but take it. This is true, he argues, both at the government level and in the villages. At the top, he suggests that popular pressure can shape any existing provincial ministry into a true Indian government. To give emphasis to this point, he deals at governmental level just with League premier Suhrawardy, whose politics he opposes. Neither the British governor nor the British army commander found Gandhi willing to accept their help; all his requests go directly to the Muslim League ministry. He entreats people to support this government because it is

Indian, or to turn it out for a better Indian government. Let the ministry call its rule Pakistan or anything else, he urges with persuasive Gandhian argument; he would not oppose it so long as it protected the people's fundamental rights. (He always stipulates that Pakistan should not be sought until India is free and that it should assure friendliness to its Indian neighbors.) This is his appeal to Muslims on the ideological level.

Talking to villagers, Gandhi gives full rein to his anarchist instincts. A firm believer that no government is good government, Gandhi admonishes these peasants to live together quietly and to rely on themselves. 'If a neighbor was ailing, would they run to the Congress or the League to ask them what should be done? That was an unthinkable proposition,' says the report of one prayer speech. 'They should in such matters [a solution of their daily problems of life] look toward themselves and if they did that, then their desire for neighborly peace would be reflected by the leaders.' If the Hindu and Muslim inhabitants of one village can begin practicing what he calls the nonviolence of the strong, Gandhi believes, the path to communal peace throughout India will be open.

What progress has he made with this doctrine? Gandhi himself has never underestimated the task. Writing to a relative in December, he explained:

My present mission is the most complicated and difficult one of my life. I can sing with cent per cent truth: 'The night is dark and I am far from home; Lead Thou Me On.' I have never experienced such darkness in my life before. The nights seem to be pretty long. The only consolation is that I feel neither baffled nor disappointed. I am prepared for any eventuality. 'Do or die' has to be put to test here. 'Do' here means Hindus and Mussalmans should learn to live together in peace and amity. Otherwise, I should die in the attempt. It is really a difficult task. God's will be done.

When Gandhi began his village tour, Muslim listeners left his prayer meetings in protest against the multi-faith ritual which, to a monotheistic Mussalman, would appear sacrilegious. His chroniclers tell of his meeting surliness in the early days. He was sometimes held up by destroyed bamboo bridges, brambles were strewn on his path and boycotts became blatant. Even today *Dawn* demands the removal of 'this unwelcome visitor' from Bengal. Its editor chides Mr Suhrawardy for observing that Gandhi's presence has helped restore calm to the district. Several of Gandhi's followers are scattered through Noakhali villages for independent work. They have reported hostile demonstrations against them and against Hindu families returning to their looted homes. (The earrings of one woman reportedly were cut off her lobes when she arrived back at the village from which her family had fled.)

I walked with Gandhi and sat at his feet during prayers in the twelfth week of his stay in East Bengal and the fourth week of his village-to-village pilgrimage. No difficult incidents had then occurred for many days. Carefully watching faces in the gathering of 700 villagers at the prayers, I thought I detected a spirit of neutrality mixed with curiosity. Some Muslims glared at the Ramdhun praise, but I saw none leave the open-air meeting. They stood passively during the ritual, listened quietly to the after-prayer talk and its translation, and then went away. Few but Hindus trailed along for the evening walk.

Even an advance from expressed opposition to neutral silence is progress. Given the months that Gandhi might be prepared to stay in the area, the process may go further. Gandhi's personality is strong and vibrant. By direct contact he can often win over the unfriendly and the uninterested. This is obviously his great effort to prove to Jinnah that a single appeal can be successful with both Hindus and Muslims. It may be one of his last exertions against the threat of civil war. And yet, if Gandhi is striving for the magical touch that will transform the situation

in this critical year of 1947, long odds stand against him. His approach is that of a prophet to a basic human problem, and prophets work for future generations. It is almost as if Gandhi had already admitted that India will miss this opportunity to become a free, united nation and had started—at the age of 77—planting his seeds in preparation for the next chance. If that is true, he must bear part of the blame for rousing profound suspicions among Muslims during the last 10 years. More than once he has torpedoed a prospective inter-party agreement by declaring a partisan view. But Gandhi is not so defeatist as to give up hope. He is unquestionably deriving from his present experience a fresh, sensitive responsiveness to village mentality: this will stand him in good stead in judging the mood of the country for future action. Yet in the week-by-week degeneration of political prospects, one could wish with many of his followers that Gandhi might apply his mind and heart to a national settlement which would bring inter-party cooperation without incurring what he calls appeasement at the cost of honor.

No such tangled analysis is necessary in respect to Gandhi's religious mission in East Bengal. Here he is Defender of the Faith, and Hindus across India recognize him as such. Witness the frequent references to the well-known reformer and revivalist, Shankaracharya. This Hindu saint of the eighth century reputedly walked barefooted to the four corners of India in a pilgrimage to free Brahmanism from the smothering embrace of Buddhism. When Hindus today draw analogies between his march and Gandhi's, they demonstrate their fear that Islam, too, may be capable of a bear's hug.

To the relief of one Noakhali village Gandhi sent a Muslim member of his ashram, Miss Amtus Salam. She found the local Muslims still acting aggressively toward their neighbors. In the Gandhian tradition she decided not to eat until Muslims returned a sacrificial sword which during the October upheaval had been looted from a Hindu home. Now, a fast concentrates very heavy social pressure on its objects, as Indians have long since learned. The sword was never found. Possibly it had been dropped into a pond. Whatever had happened, the nervous Muslim residents were almost ready to agree to anything when Gandhi arrived in that village on the 25th day of Miss Salam's fast. Her doctor reported that life was ebbing. After hours of discussion (which reporters said Gandhi took as seriously as the Cabinet Delegation negotiations) Gandhi persuaded the village leaders to sign a written promise that they would never molest Hindus again. Then he put the whole issue into a capsule. According to a report which I believe is the self-written authorized version:

Gandhiji explained the significance underlying the demand for the return of the stolen sword. What was being demanded, he said, was freedom for the minority community to practice their religion and worship their gods in any manner usual with them, and freedom to pursue their normal avocations. Gandhiji laid special emphasis on religious toleration....The essence of Miss Salam's demand, he told the Muslims, was an assurance that they would use all their influence to see that no member of the Hindu community was obstructed from performing his religious rites and worship in any manner he liked.

In other prayer talks Gandhi returned frequently to this theme. People had told him, he stated one day, that if Muslims asked Hindus to accept Islam if they wanted to save themselves or their property, and if Hindus responded, there was no compulsion. What Gandhi wanted to say, according to the approved report,

was that this was acceptance of Islam under the threat of force. Conversion, Gandhiji held, was made of sterner stuff. The statement reminded him of the days when Christian missionaries, so called, used to buy children in days of famine and bring them up as Christians. This was surely

no acceptance of Christianity. Similarly, the acceptance of Islam, to be real and valid, should be wholly voluntary and must be based on proper knowledge of two faiths—one's own and the one presented for acceptance. This was the view Gandhi had held all his life. He did not believe in conversion as an institution.

Gandhi and all Hindus deplored the killings in Noakhali. But it is clear that to their minds the deaths were less atrocious than the conversions. These were a real threat to Hinduism, not merely as a faith but as a social organism. Should they be allowed to stand, it seemed to Gandhi, other Hindus might find themselves forced to profess Islam in order to live peacefully where their lands and homes are. Already Muslims number 80 percent in Noakhali, a corner of India in which their claim is staked for a completely Islamic Pakistan. Conversions, if unchecked, would mean the disappearance of Hinduism in the region. And once it were proved possible to 'Islamicize' an area by show of force, many Hindus fear that the process would spread to other areas in which Muslims are in a heavy majority. In the belief that Gandhi is preserving the spark of Hinduism against the blast that would try to extinguish it, they are already canonizing him.

7. Gandhi's Speech about Communal Disturbances

Unamended Version of Gandhi's Prayer Meeting Speech, Debipur (Noakhali), 17 February 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 33/7/47, NAI.

Passed as Amended

REUTER TELEGRAM

Press Advice No. 1

Debipur (Noakhali) 17 February: The following is the authorized version of Mahatma Gandhi's post prayer this evening:

Mahatma Gandhi drew attention to two things that had been brought to his notice. The first was that a complaint, in sending which he was unfortunately an instrument, had been found on enquiry by officers to be without foundation. Articles, which were reported to have been looted, were merely found in the very place where they were said to have been looted. This was a serious matter. It was the second case that had come under his notice. Yesterday some Muslim friends had come to him and admitted that Muslims had undoubtedly gone mad on October last, but though they had not been so bad as the Hindus had been in Bihar, the Hindus were making for it by putting Muslims to inconvenience by lodging false complaints against some of them. They said that the false complaints were far larger than the true ones. That was not the way to bring the two together. He said that all those who lodged false complaints should be prosecuted and severely punished on conviction. If he was the Superintendent of Police or the Minister he would certainly institute proceedings and bring the perjurers to justice. For him, as a citizen desirous of serving his country, he would only be able to do something if the names and addresses of the perjured complainants were given to him. So far he had received no such names. The only case that was sent to him could not be supported when the complainant was requested to support his complaint. Generally, he would say that Hindus who lodged false complaints injured themselves, their co-religionists and the whole country.

The other thing he wished to draw attention was a letter he had received from a responsible person who was doing the work of bringing about peace between the two communities. *It was that a lad was molested by some Muslims and that the latter had threatened the Hindus that they were to expect more drastic measures than last October's after he had left Noakhali, or, which was the same thing, as after his death. He would like to think that this statement was untrue. But he feared it was not. But he did hope that the poison was limited to a few illmannered persons. Whether, however, it was restricted to a few or whether it was a widespread trait, he ventured to think it was wholly against Islam. This, he said, with apologies to Fazlul Huq Saheb, but no less firmly than on that account.*¹ It would be an evil day for Islam or any religion when it was impatient of outside criticism. He did not believe himself to be an outsider. He respected Islam he respected every other religion as his own and therefore he claimed to be a sympathetic and friendly critic. It was up to every good Muslim to take up a firm and unequivocal stand against what he believed to be vicious propaganda.

Mahatma Gandhi held the prayer in front his house here. He had a long walk after the prayer. Mr Satish Dasgupta came from the Haimchar area, walking fourteen miles, and met Mahatma Gandhi. Mr Dasgupta is still busy chalking out the final routes of the third part of Mahatma Gandhi's waking tour. (END)

¹ The italicized portion is the censored part of Gandhi's prayer speech and has been included to demonstrate notions of censorship.

8. Report from Bengal Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report for Bengal for the First Half of February 1947,
18 February 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/2/47, NAI.

...II. Communal.

12. The general outward situation has tended to improve in all areas, despite a setback in Dacca.

In West Bengal the situation is peaceful except in Asansol where prominent members of the Muslim League have been paying frequent visits to the refugee camps and where an office of the League Rehabilitation Committee has been opened with the object of finding lands and buildings for settling Muslim refugees from Bihar: these activities are reported to be helping to increase communal tension in the area. In Midnapore and Bankura, however, relations are almost normal and there were no incidents following the *Saraswati Puja*.

In the Presidency Division the general communal situation is improving and in the 24-Parganas district Union Board elections are proceeding smoothly and sharp communal lines are being avoided.

The disturbance in North Bengal at Saidpur, referred to in the last Report, has fortunately not had any serious repercussions. A setback occurred on the last date of January with the organized shouting of slogans by members of both communities, and a further setback on the 2nd when a case of stabbing occurred, fortunately not serious. Apart from these incidents the situation has remained under control and confidence is slowly returning, the main problem now being rehabilitation which has been taken up. No incident worth mentioning has occurred elsewhere in the Division and the events in Saidpur have not caused much increase of tension

in the neighbouring districts. The number of Bihar refugees in Dinajpur has however risen to about 6,400 and these refugees participated in the anti-Punjab demonstrations.

13. There was again an outburst of communal feeling at Dacca, where, for no adequate reason, 11 stabbings took place on 10th, 6 of them proving fatal, followed by one stabbing on the 11th which also proved fatal. Since then there has been no further development and it is heartening that the general public were clearly both unprepared for and dismayed at this latest outbreak. Demonstrations and public meetings in protest against this recrudescence of communal ill-feeling were staged with the approval of the local authorities. Stringent measures—the imposition of the Defence scheme and curfew were taken—and the present indications are that the trouble has died down. In Chittagong Division the general overall situation has continued to improve though there has been a good deal of dissatisfaction among the Muslims at what they have regarded as police oppression in Noakhali. In Raipur thana in Noakhali the repatriation of refugees has been slow; there has however been recently an influx of refugees from Chandpur and about three to four hundred a day have been arriving to Chaumahani and Sonaimuri. There have however been several incidents of a communal nature and the interception of quantities of acid and petroleum in the Noakhali district in suspicious circumstances may also have some significance.

14. The latest reports from Noakhali indicate that the original estimates of damage done were below the actual figures: the number of reported Hindu deaths is now 193; the numbers of homesteads 'burnt' and 'looted without being burnt' are now reported to be 826 and 1,340 respectively. Both in Chittagong and Tippera there is growing irritation at Mr Gandhi's prolonged stay in the area, said to be to divert public attention from Bihar and focus it on Noakhali. A number of prisoners in the communal disturbances cases went on hunger-strike during the period but subsequently all broke their fast....

9. Position of Hindus

Letter from Ashutosh Lahiry to K.C. Chakrawarty, 27 February 1947
AIHM Papers, File No. P-107, NMML.

Babu Kumud Chandra Chakrawarty,
Secretary,
Hindu Mahasabha,
Mymensingh, (East Bengal).

My dear Kumud Babu,

Many thanks for your letter. I am staying here indefinitely. From the report of Somnath Lahiry it appears a number of villages have been damaged in Susaug Area and numerous persons have been massacred but your report is rather very cautious. I hope this is the final truth. Kindly let me know if the Provincial Sabha has arranged any relief.

Position of Bengal, as result, of the latest announcement of the Prime Minister, is extremely grave. Pakistan is almost inevitable. Partition is no solution. The only thing which the Hindus can now do is to organize a resistance against every act of injustice or wrong, to the Hindus, while keeping up an effective agitation both against Pakistan and Partition, if these be carried into effect. Through fight and stern resistance alone the Hindus can recover their freedom. There is now, therefore, little work for the people who dominate the Hindu Mahasabha in

Bengal for they are not a type of men who are competent to undertake such grave and risky business.

Trust you all are doing well,

Yours sincerely,
General Secretary.

10. Legislation regarding Crimes against Women and Conversions

Extract from Question in Legislative Assembly, 5 March 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 22/16/47, NAI.

Legislative Assembly

Starred Question No. 744.

(To be answered on the 5th March, 1947)

744. *Mr Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to state whether the Government of India propose to introduce legislation in connection with crimes against women and forcible marriages and conversions?

REPLY:

The Honourable Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel:

No; the provisions of the existing law are considered adequate for the purpose.

...(Notes in the Home Department)

Please see the Legislative Assembly question in the p.u.c. The question presumably refers to the riots in East Bengal when the crimes mentioned in part (a) of the question took place. The Bengal Premier recently made a statement in the Bengal Legislative Assembly on the riots in Noakhali and Tippera in connection with a censure motion. He has given the following figures for offences against women:

Abductions	10
Forcible marriages	2
Criminal assault	No specific information.

Figures for forcible conversions are not given. These are the latest figures.

2. Part (d) of the question is for the Provincial Government as the compensation will be for the victims of communal riots in the Province.

3. Parts (b) and (c): The crimes that took place in East Bengal which have been referred to in the question were in connection with local communal riots and therefore these may be taken as relating to 'Public Order', a Provincial subject. Since an element of force is involved in these crimes they can always be dealt with under the Ordinary criminal of marriage laws in force. The question however talks of legislative or other steps for special preventive and punitive measures. This would mean an amendment of the criminal and marriage laws and since these are concurrent subjects, the Central Government can also legislate on these matters. But Central Government should perhaps legislate only in matters where the Legislation is required for the whole of British India and not in cases where the legislation is required to

meet the situation in one or two Provinces. Where the ordinary law is sufficient to meet the situation Provincial Governments who are not affected may not like to have stringent legislative measures introduced. All the Provincial Governments and Chief Commissioners will have to be consulted before Legislation. Even if the Central Government legislate the question of giving effect to lies in the hands of Provincial Governments.

The question of undertaking legislation or taking any other preventive or punitive steps should therefore it appears be left in the hands of the Provincial Government in this matter we may therefore reply for parts (b) and (c), if the question is admitted that as such crimes occurred in connection with communal riots the matter is primarily one for the Provincial Government concerned. The Central Government has, in any case, no executive authority to deal with such problems in Governors' Provinces.

11. Report from Bengal Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report for Bengal for the First Half of March 1947,
18 March 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.

... II. Communal

9. Except in the Chittagong Division there has been a general improvement in the communal situation in the Province though some reactions as a result of the recent communal disturbances in the Punjab have been apprehended by certain District Officers. In West Bengal the only incident of note centered round the Ghushkhara Bihar Refugee Relief camp where 21 refugees were arrested following the report that the police outpost at the camp had been attacked by a large crowd of refugees. An enquiry into the incident has been ordered. The *Janmastami* procession and *Holi* festival passed off without incident though, in Dacca, the District Magistrate had to intervene personally to settle a dispute between the police and the processionists. The only other incident of note in the Division was the explosion of a bomb in Patuakhali early in the month when a Hindu house was being searched for arms.

10. In Chittagong Division the Commissioner reports a distinct deterioration in the communal situation in both Chittagong district and Noakhali. In Chittagong the deterioration has been due to the activities of the Muslim National Guard referred to in the Political section. In Noakhali several instances, indicative of communal ill-feeling, have been reported, notably the tying down and beating by Hindus of the inmates of a house following arson and dacoity and the garlanding by local Hindus of the eight up-country armed Hindu constables, who took part in the firing on Muslims at Sandwip last October, at the time of their departure from the island. The Provincial leader of the Muslim National Guards has also been touring the area and making speeches of a provocative nature referring to the coming religious war against all who stand in the way of Muslim interests. Speeches made by local Muslim League supporters have also been a direct incitement to violence against Hindus—the conclusion drawn by the Commissioner being that such persons intended to foment communal disturbances: appropriate action is under consideration by the local officers.



12. Communal Situation in Noakhali and Chandpur

A Report from the Associated Press of India, 20 March 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 33/11/47, NAI.

The Associated Press of India (Inland News Telegrams)

The following is for press advise:

‘Calcutta, 20 March.—In a statement issued today Dr Shyama Prasad Mookherjee states during the last fortnight we have been received information from Noakhali and Chandpur that the communal situation there is fast deteriorating and requires immediate attention at the hands of the authorities. From numerous letters and personal interviews held with local representatives we find that loot, arson, attacks and intimidation of the minority community have become common. Unfortunately the victims do not receive due protection from the local authorities. Accused persons who are now released on bail are openly threatening the villagers (villagers) demanding withdrawal of cases, on failure of which serious consequences are threatened. The situation is further worsened in view of the decision to observe 23rd March as Pakistan Day. Meetings are being held and preparations are being made which are naturally having an unnerving effect. Many of the thanas have been removed, and this has emboldened the mischief makers.

Dr Mookherjee quotes from a telegram he has received from Mr Satish Chandra Das Gupta, Gandhi’s camp, Ramganj, which says that loot, arson and other communal cases are increasing. Mr Das Gupta adds: Authentic cases are being reported by me to the police superintendent without perceptible reaction. All our centres report threats of violence. Sunday next is rumoured to be observed as Pakistan Day by parading with illegal processions.’

Dr Mookherjee also quotes from a telegram received by him from the Secretary of the Chandpur Bar Association, and concludes:

‘I have forwarded both these telegrams to HE the Governor and the Chief Minister and have also had a personal talk with the latter. I have requested both of them that immediate steps should be taken to stop all meetings and demonstrations on 23rd March and Government should take every production to prevent recurrence of any trouble in the affected area.’—API RAP 4 p.m.

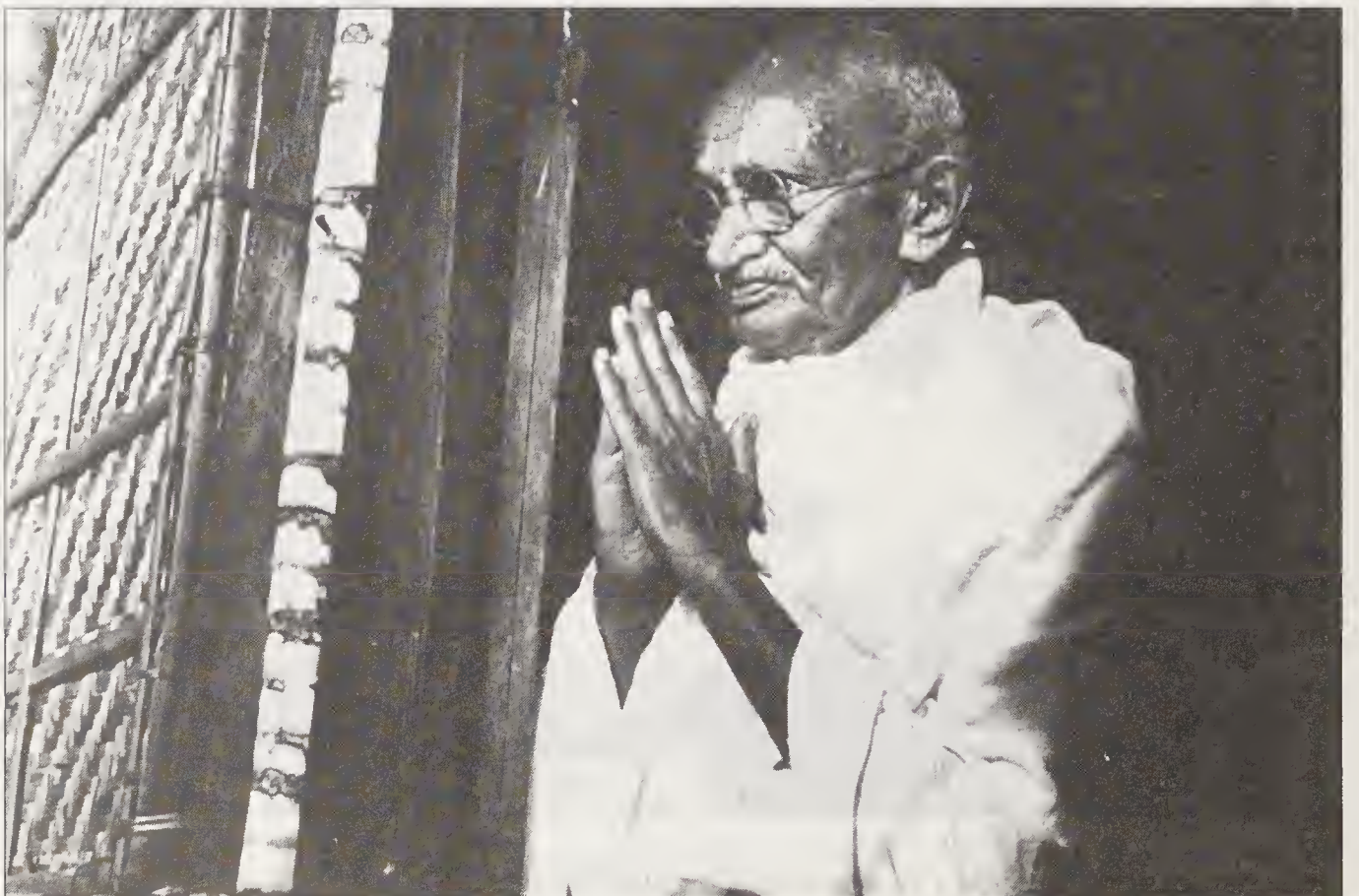
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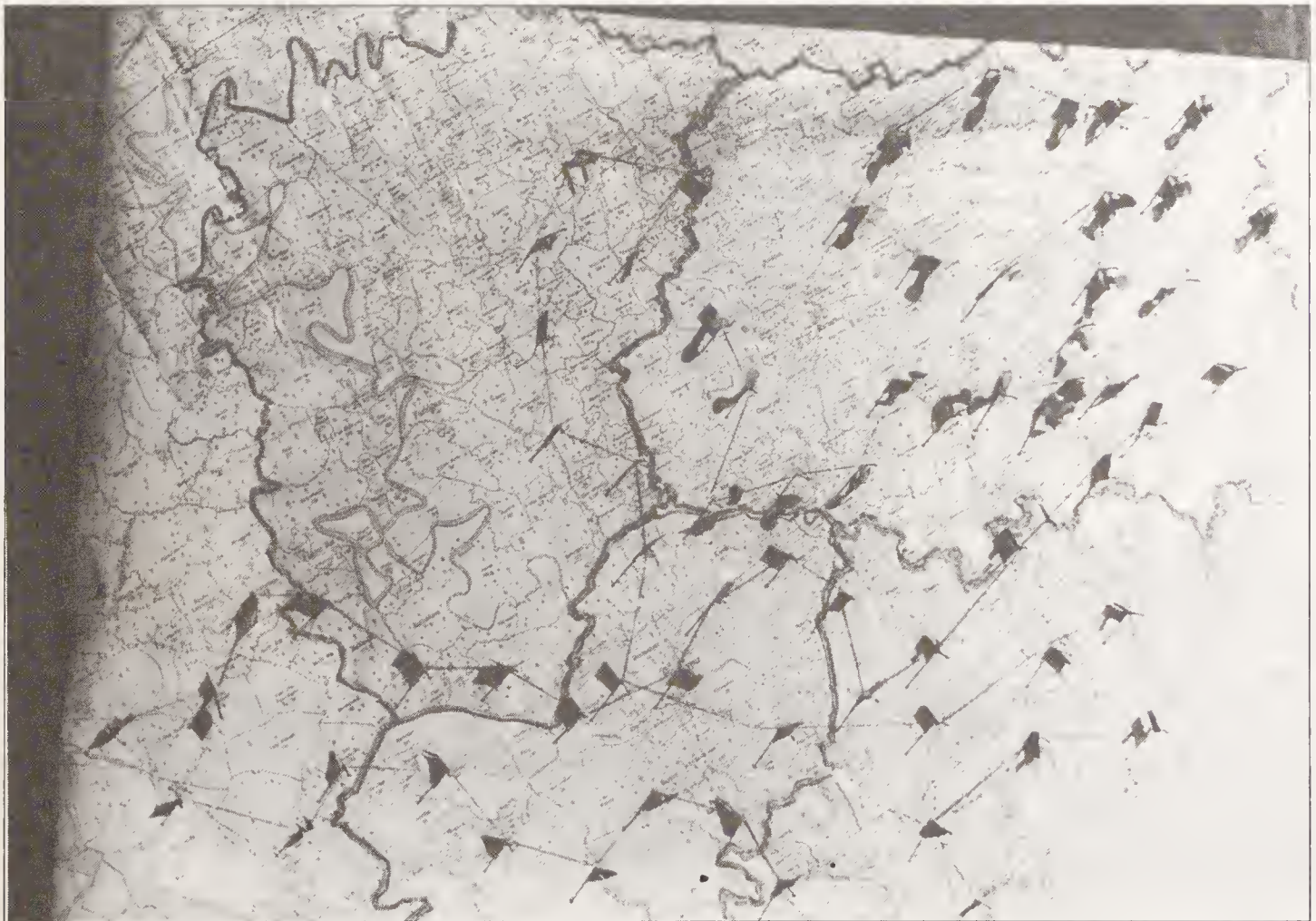


Gandhi's Visit to Noakhali*



* Gandhi was in Noakhali from 7 November 1946 to 1 March 1947.









B. BIHAR

1. Communal Situation in Bihar

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to M.K. Gandhi Enclosing His Letter to H.S. Suhrawardy,
1 January 1947
SWJN, Vol. I, pp. 103–8.

New Delhi

My dear Bapu,

I enclose copy of a letter I am sending to Suhrawardy.

I might add that there were probably a few cases of rape and abduction. The number must be small. The nature of the upheaval was such that this did not fit in with it and the whole thing lasted only a few days.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

Enclosure

New Delhi

Dear Mr Suhrawardy,

I wrote to you a rather hurried letter from Srirampur on the 29th December. This was sent to you in Calcutta on the 30th.

2. In Calcutta I met General Bucher and enquired from him about the situation in Bihar from the military point of view. He told me that there had been no incident of any importance whatever during the last six weeks and that situation was returning to normality.

3. I broke journey at Patna and met some of the Ministers (the Premier was not there) as well as Mr Houlton, the Relief Commissioner, and Mr T.P. Singh, the Assistant Relief Commissioner. I discussed the situation with them and more specially the points raised in your letters to Mahatma Gandhi and in the Bihar League's report. They were all agreed that there was no foundation for the specific points mentioned by you and that the report was, to say the least of it, grossly exaggerated. Some described it in much stronger language and said that there was hardly any truth in it.

4. I also told them about the Atri incident mentioned in your letter. I found that no one had heard of it. Indeed I was definitely informed that no incident even faintly resembling that had happened ever since the second week of November, about the time I returned from Patna. There was some agrarian trouble about the 16th November in Hathiaunda, Saharsa District. This was something entirely different from the communal troubles which had taken place previously, though it took a certain communal aspect. It appears that two Hindu boys were killed and thereupon a mob attacked some Muslims of whom 35 were killed.

5. Another incident took place a few days ago at Masani. No Muslims were involved in this. The police were searching a number of houses. This irritated people there and a crowd of Hindus attacked the police who fired upon them.

6. Apart from these two incidents nothing of note has happened during the last seven weeks in Bihar and in every way, except one, the situation has been returning rapidly to normality. This one exception relates to the exodus of people from Bihar to Bengal. The curious part

of this exodus is that much of it has taken place in December, that is, about a month after the end of the disturbances. Further it has taken place from areas where there had been no trouble whatever as in Shahabad District. In Chapra the exodus started round about the 10th December although Chapra had been completely calm for at least six weeks previously. There was no question of the situation deteriorating. In fact it had considerably improved. Yet Muslim League volunteers went about asking and influencing people to leave their homes and generally creating a psychology of fear. This has been done and is being, done on a fairly widespread and organized basis, with what object I do not know as it can do no good to anyone concerned. There is no question whatever of any risk to these people many of whom actually remained in their villages throughout the disturbances.

7. Houlton, the Relief Commissioner, told me that this was one of the main difficulties he had to face and but for this the situation would be normal. There was no reason, he said, why anyone should go away as the situation was quiet and there was no apprehension of further trouble. Indeed the peasantry were in a greatly chastened mood and often full of remorse for what they had done.

8. Houlton expressed his surprise at the Muslim League report which apparently had been prepared with no attempt at verification.

9. About the number of deaths according to present information available, the figures are supposed to be between 4,300 and 4,700, in any event under 5,000. Patna District was the most heavily affected and far the greatest number of deaths took place there. Some attempt has been made to collect accurate figures for this District and to check them. The Assistant Relief Commissioner stated that the figure thus obtained after checking was 2,700 for Patna District. It was added, however, that after fuller inquiry the figure may have to be increased somewhat. Every one was, however, agreed that the number of deaths in the whole province was under 5,000. They had found that very often refugees had been included among those dead and had thus gone to swell the figures of the dead.

10. The allegations of deaths and ill-treatment in hospitals were stoutly and indignantly denied. It was stated that the hospitals achieved remarkable success considering the number of serious cases that they received and the doctors were of opinion that everything possible had been done. Lavish use was made of the latest drugs and there were indeed very few deaths.

11. The figures for refugees at present are roughly 40,000 in Bihar and probably a like number in Bengal. The highest figure for refugees was 110,000. Many of these returned to their homes. Many who had not left their homes previously have now left them at the instigation of the Muslim League volunteers.

12. The complaint that there is a ban on volunteers was said to be completely without foundation. There is no ban on volunteers and a very large number of Muslim League volunteers are present in the province and they are deliberately coming in the way of a return to normality. There have been complaints about their behaviour. In Patna District the Government camps have actually been put in charge of Muslim League volunteers. In Monghyr volunteers were regulated as an excess of them created some confusion.

13. You mentioned in your letter that Khwaja Nazimuddin was not permitted to go somewhere. It appears this had nothing to do with the Provincial Government. A military sentry stopped him because he did not have the necessary pass. Even Houlton, the Relief Commissioner, was stopped by the military sentries as he had forgotten his pass. This matter has been put right since. It was well known that passes were required and only a few days

before. Mr Feroz Khan Noon had gone with a pass. These are military regulations with which the Provincial Government has nothing to do.

14. I might add that even now the Government camps in Patna are largely run by Muslim League volunteers who have sometimes not allowed Government agents to go inside the camps. You will realize that it is an odd situation for the Government to organize a camp, to pay for all expenses and then to have its own representatives treated in this manner by outside volunteers.

15. A census has been taken of the total number of houses destroyed or damaged. Including those, which have been slightly damaged, the number of huts or houses comes to 3,700. About 50 of them are only partly damaged. All these are mostly huts.

16. The complaints about the food in camps, I was told, had no foundation. The food was in fact on the whole of a high standard and independent observers have said as much. The Relief Commissioner told me that arrangements about food and other matters were generally good.

17. There was no question of the ration being cut off. In Monghyr it was stated once that refugees should return to their nearby houses which were intact and if they did not return the ration might be cut off. As a matter of fact it was not cut off. Even when people went back to their villages these rations continued to be given to them.

18. Every effort is being made to start rebuilding houses. Orders have been placed for very large quantities of building materials. It is hoped that these materials will begin arriving within a fortnight.

19. It is proposed also to improve communications. Roads are being thus improved to make the interior easily accessible.

20. The refugees in camp, even though they do not return to their villages, are given every facility to go and cut their crops and return to their camps.

21. The Provincial Government want the military to remain for some time longer, chiefly in order to help in the rehabilitation schemes and in cutting the crops. General Bucher, however, told me that he would like them withdrawn as there was no need for them.

22. I was told that there was still some nervousness among the Muslim population, chiefly caused by the propaganda of the Muslim League volunteers. This nervousness, Houlton and others assured me, was quite unwarranted and that there was no fear of fresh incidents. The peasantry, who had misbehaved, were genuinely sorry. The outbreak was a mass peasant upheaval, and such upheavals are not followed by sporadic incidents later on.

23. These are some of the facts I gathered from my conference at Patna. You will notice that the picture they present is completely different from that contained in your letters to Gandhiji.

24. The Bihar Ministers told me that they were anxious to have an inquiry. It was the Governor who had discountenanced the idea, but they would press for it. They welcomed Gandhiji's suggestion that there should be a joint inquiry into the occurrences in East Bengal and Bihar. Such an inquiry should not be superficial but nevertheless should be of a more or less summary character. If you agree to this there should be no difficulty. If, however, you feel that you cannot join such an inquiry, even then they would like to proceed with their own inquiry.

25. There are one or two other matters I should like to mention. There is a mention of Jayaprakash Narayan in the Bihar League's report. This in itself shows how completely wide

off the mark the Bihar League is. One may or may not agree with Jayaprakash Narayan about his politics, but it is just fantastic nonsense to refer to him in the manner the Bihar League report has done. He is a confirmed socialist and is as far removed from a communalist as anyone can be. He was away from Bihar for some time previous to the disturbances and only returned when I was there. He did extraordinarily good work. This instance as well as many others show how unbalanced a document the Bihar League's report is.

26. I happen to know the Bihar peasantry fairly well and have some influence with them. I am quite clear in my mind that the extreme rapidity with which the Bihar trouble subsided was due not so much to the presence of the military and the police, though that helped, but to the intensive and widespread propaganda conducted by many of us as well as by the Government. I left Patna when I felt sure that the trouble had ended. The aftermath, of course, remains and it is up to us to deal with that effectively. But unfortunately the activities of the Muslim League in Bihar are bent on keeping alive the nervous tension and an atmosphere of fear.

Yours sincerely
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Action Taken against Hindus

Letter from B.S. Moonje to Vallabhbhai Patel, 6 January 1947

B.S. Moonje Papers, Correspondence with Patel, File No. P-25, NMML.

Dear Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel,

I trust my last letter of 11th December 1946 enclosing a copy of my report on Bihar Disturbances has reached your hands. I wonder if you had time to go through it.

I learn from the Government Reports published in the papers that more than 1300, that is, about 1400 Hindus have been so far arrested in Bihar, while the Moslems similarly arrested are only 81. It would be interesting to know how the figures compare with similar arrests in Bengal, Ahmedabad, Bombay and other places. Your office may have complete figures in the matter.

It seems the arrests of Hindus in Bihar are inspired by the feeling that the Hindus were the aggressors, but it is not a fact as I have shown in my report. I am glad to know that the Bihar Government are thinking of appointing a Committee of Enquiry. But I hope it will not be like the Bengal Committee. If the Enquiry is conducted fairly and freely, I have absolutely no doubt that it would come to the conclusion that the actual starting of the quarrels in Bihar was the result of provocations, offensive challenges and indecent assaults on women by the Moslems.

But even supposing that the Hindus have been provoked by the happenings in Noakhali, is it not too much to make the Hindus alone suffer to such an extent. When I was in Bihar, I had personally noted how the people felt the sting of Mahatma Gandhi's accusation against them that they were a disgrace to humanity. They felt distressed and disappointed because in the heart of hearts, they felt and knew that they were really not the aggressors and that though the Moslems were really the aggressors even in Bihar. They were feted and treated as if they were the honourable guests of the Government. Such discrimination was causing great demoralization amongst the Hindus. Would such a demoralization, if cause, pay the Congress Government, that is, the Hindu Government in the long run? It is now certain that

the Hindu–Moslem question will not be settled without war. Mr Churchill is at the bottom and Mr Jinnah will not give it at least until the next General Elections in England.

Under the circumstances, I feel that we Hindus will be no where if the Hindu masses are thus subjected to demoralization when the real testing time of the bloody war between the Hindus and Moslems come.

But after all is retaliation a crime? So as to reserve the appallation of disgrace. What do we find in England? In England the Britishers say in reply to the flogging of British officers by Jews in Palestine—‘You flog; we burn’ and accordingly in retaliation they have burnt two synagogues and offered threats of violence to prominent Zionists. Thus retaliation is human nature and no moral crime.

Whatever it may be, I have to request you to take some personal interest in the matter. Kindly speak to the Hon’ble Mr Shri Krishna Narain Sinha, the Prime Minister of Bihar. The Hindu Mahasabha in its session recently held in Gorakhpur unanimously adopted a resolution to the effect that in the interest and with the object of bringing about communal harmony, Government should declare general amnesty.

Begging to be excused for the troubles and trusting this finds you in improving health.

Yours sincerely,
Dr B.S. Moonje

3. ‘League and Bihar Government’

Editorial from *Aaj* (Translated from Hindi), 12 January 1947.

Communal riots occurred in Bengal and Bihar... But the big difference between Bengal and Bihar riots is that whereas in Bengal the riots were orchestrated, according to a premeditated plan, the riots in Bihar were spontaneous and were in reaction to the events in Bengal. This is also proved by the fact that in many riot affected areas in Bihar, Hindus and Muslims unitedly fought the rioters and at many places Hindus saved their Muslim neighbours, risking their own lives. Moreover, it needs to be kept in mind that just as riots began suddenly, they ended all of a sudden and completely, one week after they began. Today, there are no complaints from any corner of Bihar that one community is being attacked by the other community....

The Congress ministry in Bihar has shown remarkable firmness and readiness in dealing with the riots. It could only have been possible under Congress rule in Bihar that the entire expenditure on refugee camps was borne by the government but relief activities were managed by Muslim League workers—those very Muslim Leaguers who use these facilities to carry out their propaganda and persuade refugees to migrate to the Pakistan provinces and prevent them from returning home. Even then the Bihar Provincial Muslim League has put forth 14 demands before the Bihar Congress Government and warned that if the government does not agree to these demands by 30th January, this will imply that the government does not wish Muslims to stay in Bihar and is forcing them to migrate to the Pakistan areas. If this is not a challenge from the Muslim League to the Bihar Government then what else is?....

There is no doubt that no just government can accept such outlandish demands and no level-headed Muslims of Bihar can support such an ‘ultimatum’....



4. Gandhi Demands a Commission of Inquiry

Extract from a Letter from M.K. Gandhi to Vallabhbhai Patel, 14 January 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVI, p. 352.

SHAHPUR,

CHI VALLABHBHAI,

...Now about the proposed Bihar commission of inquiry. It was some gentleman from Bihar who gave me the information. I did not note down his name. Is it not a fact that you, the Governor and the Viceroy are against the appointment of a Commission and that this is sufficient to stop the Chief Minister from appointing one? In spite of all this, I am strongly of opinion that if no commission is appointed, the League's report will be accepted as true. I alone know what pressure is being put on me....

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

5. Bihar Ministers Should Be Held Responsible

Fragment of a Letter from M.K. Gandhi to Ali Hussain, 18 January 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVI, p. 367.

...I am firmly of opinion that whilst the Bihar Ministry may not be accomplices in the crime committed by the Bihar Hindus, to their shame and disgrace, as responsible Ministers they could not be acquitted of responsibility for the behaviour of crowds within their jurisdiction.

6. Nehru's Apprehensions about the Communal Situation

Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to M.K. Gandhi, 30 January 1947
SWJN, Vol. I, pp. 110-12.

Dear Bapu

....I am quite sure that your visit to and tour in Noakhali District has great significance and importance. It is not for me to suggest to you to go against your own inclination. You are the best judge. What I had ventured to put to you however, and would like to repeat, is that conditions all over India to some extent are very unsatisfactory. There is a certain disruptive tendency at work, which affects our work in every direction. The whole Congress organization is suffering from it and we, who are in the Government, have no time at all to give to any work except the immediate problems, which confront us. It is difficult to write much in a letter. But I want you to realize that there is in some ways a progressive deterioration in the situation and I feel very unhappy about it. I would not mind so much any number of what I would call external problems however difficult they might be. But when our own approach is not quite clear and there are different viewpoints and pulls, then it becomes even more difficult to deal with any problem.

I know that we must learn to rely upon ourselves and not run to you for help on every occasion. But we have got into this bad habit and we do often feel that if you had been easier of access our difficulties would have been less.

I am worried about Bihar. I made it quite clear to some of the Ministers there that they must ask for a Commission of Inquiry or appoint it themselves even if the Bengal Government got out of it. I thought they had agreed, but nothing has been done since. I do not know the reason for this, and I am writing to Sri Babu about it.

I have a feeling, for which I have no proof whatever, that there is no strong desire for an inquiry. The Bihar Government anyhow moves slowly. The Government has done a great deal in giving relief and yet it has not done it in the right way and hence the psychological results achieved have not been great. There is a sense of fear and apprehension among the Muslim population. Badshah Khan passed through Delhi the other day and I met him. I did not have time to talk to him about Bihar, but I understand that he is not at all happy at what he found there.

I have found both in Bihar and elsewhere very little regret or remorse among the Hindu for what happened there. There is a feeling of justification. Among the Muslims there is definitely a fear, whether justified or not, that there might be further attacks on them.

In Hazara in the NWFP some horrible things were done, though, of course, in point of extent and numbers there is no comparison whatever with Bihar. In quality or lack of it there is little to choose, in my mind, between Noakhali, Bihar, Meerut District and Hazara. They all represent utter degradation and depravity.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

7. Enquiry Commission for Bihar Riots

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Sri Krishna Sinha, 31 January 1947
SWJN, Vol. I, p.112

My dear Sri Babu,

I have received a letter from Gandhiji in which he says: 'There seems to be no announcement yet by the Bihar Government of the appointment of a Commission. I am quite clear that the sooner it is done the better it would be all round.'

I do not know how this matter stands. I conveyed Gandhiji's message to Anugraha Babu and others who met me in Patna when I was coming back from Noakhali. Subsequently I think I mentioned it to you also. I think that the Bihar Government should make it perfectly clear that they want a Commission of Inquiry into the happenings in November last. I hope you will write to Gandhiji on this subject.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. 'Lest We Forget'

Dawn, 31 January 1947.

Three months have elapsed since the Great Bihar Massacre wiped out thousands of innocent human beings, rendered countless others homeless and destitute and hoisted the red light of danger as a warning to scattered minorities on their possible future fate. The first confusion

and chaos have passed, the murderous hordes have retreated into their fairs and 'peace', we are told, had been re-established.

But there is no sign yet that Authority, either provincial or Central has applied itself with sincerity and earnestness to the urgent and imperative problems arising out of the brutal orgies which it criminally failed for many days to control. On the contrary, a blanket of silence appears to have been thrown on the whole affair to make the rest of India and the world in general forget that great human suffering still remains not only unrelieved but also unavenged through the processes of the law.

Those who have perished will not come to life again, but what of the hundreds of thousands who have been uprooted for ever from the villages where for generations they had their homes, of their little cottages and settlements, of their lands, and such other worldly goods as they possessed? The exact number of the sufferers who have sought and found refuge in other provinces, notably Bengal has not been authoritatively estimated yet, although it is generally known to be in the neighbourhood of 200,000. Most of them had property in the areas from which they have been driven by fire and sword, never to return. What machinery has been set up to take a census of their property, of the crops in their fields, and of the other goods and possessions they left behind, so that these may be disposed of and the proceeds made over to their owners? And yet, this is one of the tasks which belongs undeniably to the Bihar Ministry unless it is that Ministry's desire that all this property should be quietly misappropriated by people who have no right or title to it.

Then there are those who still remain in Bihar although determined not to return to the scenes where some of their dear ones have perished and where they can never again expect security. Some of them still live on private charity, and a few in refugee camps, mostly unofficial. Where are they to go and what about their future? The Bihar Ministry claims that a number of the refugees have returned to their villages, but no figures are given nor any light thrown on the conditions under which they are now living. Our own information is that this story of the return is that this story of the return of refugees to their original homes is contrary to facts.

Next, comes the problem of the minorities whom the wave of massacre had not reached but who were searched nevertheless by the fire of aggression and lived on in terror on the terms dictated by the majority. What those terms could have been can be better imagined than described and life under such circumstances is perhaps no better than death. What arrangements has the Ministry made to release these unfortunates from the thrall of Fear—to present the majority from feeling that the hand of Law and Order also far away from them that they need not be concerned about that all?

Fourthly, a large number of girls and women, forcibly converted and carried away during the holocaust, still remain captives of their abductors. No attempt has yet been made to rescue them although many of them can be rescued if only the Government cares to make a determined effort.

These are some of the problems of rehabilitation and restriction of justice to the wronged. There are other problems as chastisement of the guilty in dealing with whom the Congress Ministry continues to be markedly negligent and deliberately tardy. Many a criminal, known to Authority and the public alike of having openly instigated the crimes or actually, taken part in them, are still at large and moving about freely, confident that they will never be brought to book. Some of them, although arrested on serious charges, have been let loose on bail when they should have been held in custody. On the other hand, many relatives of massacred people

have been arrested and kept in jail for having merely exercised the right of self-defence and heroically resisted attacks by overwhelming odds.

Finally, no Commission of Inquiry has yet been set up to hold an independent investigation into the greatest of all massacres within living memory in India or anywhere else in the world. Meanwhile, traces of the crimes committed are being obliterated and evidence destroyed.

This is the situation in Bihar after three months of the terrible happenings of October–November. Sir, Hugh Dow, the Governor, has proved utterly incompetent, callous and unworthy of the position he holds. The Viceroy has proved hardly any better, although he had been very early acquainted with the real state of affairs, not only through the League deputation headed by Khwaja Nazimuddin which met him in the middle of November, but also through a member of his personal staff who investigated the situation on the spot.

Nor can we say that, great though has been the initial work done by its members individually and collectively, notably by its President, Khwaja Nazimuddin, the Central Relief committee appointed by the Qaed-e-Azam has sustained its drive. The public, at any rate, has not heard much of its recent activities. A complete statement by the Committee of the work done, of what is planned for the future and of the complications created by the Congress Ministry's obvious policy, is overdue.

9. Bihari Muslim Refugees Must Return

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Sri Krishna Sinha, 2 February 1947
SPC, Vol. V, pp. 93–4.

New Delhi

My dear Sri Babu,

Since you left Delhi, I have not heard anything from you about the situation in Bihar. It causes continuous anxiety and unless vigorous efforts are made to set right the communal situation, you might find yourself in trouble. It is not enough that there is no more violence taking place. What is wanted is to tackle vigorously the question of refugees. They must be persuaded to go back to their villages, and for that purpose the first thing to be done is to get them out of the control and influence of the Muslim League and take the entire relief and rehabilitation work under the control of Government. You may find difficulties in doing so. Your own people may give you trouble, but you have to face it and deal with this situation firmly.

2. I suggest that you must give this work to your Momin Minister, [Abdul] Qayum Ansari, who is capable of handling this situation effectively and firmly. He can put in a large number of Momin Muslim volunteers and he could defy the League. In this matter, Mahmood may be an obstacle, but you have to overrule him.

3. I understand that Ansari is in charge of the Cottage Industries Department. If it is so, it is more appropriate that he should be allowed to handle relief and rehabilitation work of the refugees. Besides, he should be given the control and distribution of yarn. Yarn would be the principal factor in developing the cottage industry. Why yarn is given to another Minister I cannot understand.

4. What is going on about the appointment of an enquiry about the Bihar communal riots, and what do you propose to do in this matter? I understand Jawaharlal had spoken to you about it. Do not think that he has abandoned the idea, but if there are any difficulties, it is better that

they should be explained to him and you should put yourself in the right. As Bapu had asked you to appoint an inquiry, perhaps in future the question may arise when they may all turn down against you, and therefore it is better to clear up this matter in time.

5. I should like to know the number of refugees in Bihar, in what camps they are kept and what are the arrangements made for their relief and rehabilitation.

6. I should also like to know how many people have gone to Bengal and to other places. Also whether the refugees are going back now to their villages, or they are still afraid of returning to their places. Vigorous efforts should be made to remove their apprehensions about any possible danger to life or property in case of their return to their villages. Mere increase in the police force is not enough. The Hindu villagers must be persuaded to change their attitude and they must give an assurance to the refugees for their safety.

7. I am told that your Governor has complained that your Ministry is not fulfilling the undertaking given in the matter of the war service candidates. I understand that the matter is to be considered in your Cabinet shortly. All provincial ministries have fulfilled their undertaking, and it would not be wise for you, particularly in your difficult situation, to give any legitimate cause for a breach of undertaking on behalf of Government. Please write to me about it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

10. Muslim League Condemns Bihar Riots

API Report on Resolution Passed by Working Committee of Muslim League at Karachi, 2 February 1947.

Home Poll (I), File No. 33/7/47, NAI.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA

(INLAND NEWS TELEGRAMS)

KARACHI NUMBER ELEVEN (GENERAL)

KARACHI

FOURTH AND LAST RESOLUTION. THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE ALL INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE EXPRESS THEIR DEEP SENSE OF SORROW, GRIEF AND HORROR AT THE GREAT BIHAR MASS SAUGHTER (SLAUGHTER) OF THE MUSLIMS IN TENS OF THOUSANDS AND ON THE MOST INHUMAN BARBARITIES PERPETRATED AGAINST THEIR MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN ON AN UNPRECEDENTED SCALE. THE WORKING COMMITTEE CONVEY THEIR PROFOUND AND HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES TO THE BIHAR MUSLIM IN GENERAL AND TO THOSE IN PARTICULAR WHOSE RELATIONS HAVE BEEN KILLED OR INJURED AND ASSURE THE SUFFERERS, REFUGEES AND SURVIVORS OF EVERY POSSIBLE HELP FROM MUSLIM INDIA FOR THEIR REHABILITATION.

THE WORKING COMMITTEE MOST STRONGLY CONDEMN THE BIHAR GOVERNMENT FOR THEIR UTTER FAILURE TO GIVE PROTECTION TO THE MUSLIMS FOR OVER TWO WEEKS WHEN ALL CONCEIVABLE METHODS OF OPPRESSION WERE ALLOWED TO BE PERPETRATED AGAINST MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN. IN MANY CASES UNDER THE CLOSEST POSSIBLE VICINITY OF THE THANAS AND OFTEN IN PRESENCE OF POLICE OFFICIALS. EVEN NOW AFTER THE CARNAGE, THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT TAKEN STEPS TO ALLAY THE FEARS OF THE SUFFERERS BY TAKING DRASTIC ACTION AGAINST THE CULPRITS AND IMPLEMENTING SCHEMES WHICH MAY INSTILL CONFIDENCE IN THE MINDS OF THE AFFECTED MUSLIMS OF BIHAR. THE BIHAR GOVERNMENT SHOULD REALIZE THAT THOSE MUSLIMS WHOSE HOUSES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED AND WHOSE RELATIONS HAVE BEEN BUTCHERED MAIMED AND INJURED CANNOT BE

EXPECTED TO RETURN TO THEIR VILLAGES AND PROVISION MUST BE MADE FOR THEM BY EXCHANGE OF LANDS OR ACQUISITION OF LANDS OR OTHERWISE TO SETTLE THEM IN AREAS WHERE MUSLIMS STILL CONTINUE TO LIVE AND WHERE THEY ARE IN SUFFICIENT NUMBERS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST REPETITION OF SUCH INCIDENTS. (INCIDENTS.)

THE WORKING COMMITTEE AFTER CAREFUL EXAMINATION AND CONSIDERATION OF FACTS IN THEIR POSSESSION ARE DEFINITELY OF THE OPINION THAT THE BIHAR CARNAGE WAS A WELL ORGANIZED AND CLEVERLY PLANNED SCHEME WHICH WAS EXECUTED IN ALL ITS GRUESOME DETAIL WITH THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF SOME HIGHLY PLACED CONGRESSMEN AND THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND CALLS UPON THE AUTHORITIES TO IMMEDIATELY APPOINT AN IMPARTIAL JUDICIAL TRIBUNAL OF THE HIGHEST ORDER TO INVESTIGATE THE WHOLE MATTER AS A FACT FINDING COMMISSION AS DEMANDED BY THE BIHAR PROVINCIAL MUSLIM LEAGUE IN ITS RESOLUTION OF DECEMBER 1946 AND JANUARY 1947.

THE WORKING COMMITTEE FURTHER AFFIRM THE DEMAND OF THE BIHAR PROVINCIAL MUSLIM LEAGUE MADE IN ITS RESOLUTIONS OF DECEMBER 1946 AND JANUARY 1947 AND ARE OF THE OPINION THAT UNLESS THOSE DEMANDS ARE MET THE CONFIDENCE OF THE MUSLIMS WILL NOT BE RESTORED AND THEY WILL NOT FEEL SAFE IN THE PROVINCE. THE WORKING COMMITTEE, THEREFORE, CALL UPON THE GOVERNOR OF BIHAR TO USE HIS SPECIAL POWERS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MINORITY AND ADOPTION OF MEASURES FOR GIVING THEM A SENSE OF COMPLETE SECURITY. THEY FURTHER URGE UPON THE VICEROY TO DISCHARGE HIS SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND SEE THAT THE GOVERNOR OF BIHAR USES HIS SPECIAL POWERS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MUSLIM MINORITY IN BIHAR IN A MANNER THAT MAY ASSURE THE SAFETY OF THEIR HONOUR, LIFE AND PROPERTY.

THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE ALL INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE FURTHER DEMAND THAT THE BIHAR MINISTER SHOULD IMMEDIATELY ADOPT THE FOLLOWING STEPS FOR THE PREVENTION AND AGAINST THE REPETITION OF SUCH CARNAGE:

1. ARREST AND DETENTION IN JAIL OF MURDERERS AND CULPRITS OF HEINOUS OFFENCES WHO ARE STILL ROAMING ABOUT FREELY APPLAUDING THEIR MISDEEDS AND CANCELLATION OF BAIL IN ALL SUCH CASES AND THEIR TRIAL BY SPECIAL TRIBUNALS.
2. IMPOSITION OF PUNITIVE TAX OR COLLECTIVE FINES ON THE MAJORITY COMMUNITY IN THE AFFECTED AREAS AND BINDING DOWN OF INSTIGATORS AND THOSE FROM WHOM THERE IS FURTHER APPREHENSION AS DETERRENT AND PREVENTIVE MEASURE TO PREVENT RECURRENCE OF SUCH CARNAGE.
3. RELEASE ON BAIL OF THE MUSLIMS WHOSE KITH AND KIN HAVE BEEN KILLED OR ATTACKED AND WHO HAVE BEEN ARRESTED FOR DEFENDING THEMSELVES AND THEIR RELATIVES.
4. SUPPLYING OF MUSLIM OFFICERS AND MUSLIM ARMED POLICE FORCE WITH TRUCKS TO ENABLE MUSLIM MEN AND WOMEN VOLUNTEERS TO RESCUE ABDUCTED MUSLIM GIRLS.
5. TO ACCEPT THE PLAN OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE AND CENTRAL RELIEF COMMITTEE OF ESTABLISHING BIG POCKETS TO CONSOLIDATE THE MUSLIM POPULATION WITH CERTAIN SAFEGUARDS.
6. THE ENTRUSTMENT OF INVESTIGATION IN THE HANDS OF NON-HINDU OFFICERS WITH A MACHINERY FOR EXPEDITIOUS INVESTIGATION.
7. IMMEDIATE AWARD TO AFFECTED AND DISPLACED MUSLIMS OF ADEQUATE COMPENSATION ACCORDING TO THEIR RESPECTIVE STATUS AND POSITION AND TO BUILD HOUSES IN THE CENTRES OF THE POCKETS OF THEIR CHOICE AND GRANTING THEM SUFFICIENT AMOUNT TO ENABLE THEM TO BUY HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS AND IMPLEMENTS OF HUSBANDRY ACCORDING TO THEIR RESPECTIVE NEEDS.

8. THE OFFER OF ALL FACILITIES AND HELP INCLUDING ACQUISITION OF LANDS FOR THE REHABILITATION OF MUSLIMS FROM THE AFFECTED AND APPREHENDED AREAS.
9. GRANTING OF SUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MUSLIM WOMEN AND CHILDREN HOMES FOR ACCOMMODATION, SUPPORT, TRAINING EDUCATION AND MAINTENANCE OF WOMEN WHO HAVE BECOME WIDOWS AND OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE BECOME ORPHANS DUE TO THE CARNAGE.
10. GRANTING OF LICENCE FOR FIREARMS TO AT LEAST TEN PERCENT OF THE MUSLIM POPULATION WHEREVER THE BIG POCKETS OF CONSOLIDATED MUSLIMS ARE ESTABLISHED.
11. SETTING UP OF POLICE STATIONS IN SUCH AREAS MANNED BY MUSLIM OFFICERS WITH ATLEAST 50 PERCENT MUSLIM ARMED POLICE FORCE.

PENDING A DECISION BY THE AUTHORITIES CONCERNED THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE ALL INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE ADVISE THE MUSLIMS OF BIHAR TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR POPULATION BY SHIFTING TO LARGER MUSLIM VILLAGES. EVEN IN THE AFFECTED AREAS THEY ADVISE THE MUSLIMS NOT TO EVACUATE THEIR LARGER POCKETS AND CONCENTRATING IN URBAN AREAS TILL FURTHER ADVICE.

THE WORKING COMMITTEE HAVE LEARNT WITH GREAT SATISFACTION AND PRIDE THAT WHEREVER IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR THE MEAGER, IN FACT NEGLIGIBLE NUMBER OF MUSLIMS, TO DEFEND THEMSELVES, THEIR WOMEN AND CHILDREN, THEY PUT IN A BRAVE FIGHT TO THE LAST AGAINST WELL-ORGANIZED AND OVERWHELMING NUMBER OF HINDU MOBS AND DIED BRAVELY IN THE CAUSE OF ISLAM. THEIR FORTITUDE, COURAGE AND ENDURANCE IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM OF ISLAM IN INDIA SHALL SERVE AS A BEACON LIGHT TO MILLIONS OF MUSLIMS IN HINDU INDIA WHO ARE SIMILARLY PLACED IN THE MUSLIM MINORITY PROVINCES.—API

11. 'Hindu Mentality' Strong in Bihar Ministry

Letter from M.K. Gandhi to Syed Mahmud, 5 February 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVI, p. 434.

KAZIRKHIL CAMP
P.O. RAMGUNJ, NOAKHALI.

BHAI MAHMUD,

The Secretary of the Muslim League has written to me. An extract from that letter is as follows:

I have reports that the Hindu mentality is so strong in the Congress Cabinet of the Bihar Government that even a Muslim colleague is avoided. I am told that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Dr Rajendra Prasad decided that Dr Mahmood be entrusted with the relief operations in Bihar to inspire the lost Muslim confidence, still he is kept at arms length.

Please write to me whether this is correct and if it is what you have done in the matter. The Secretary further writes:

One of your Ministers who undertook tour of the affected areas is Dr Mahmood. He can give you a true idea of the brutalities and damages. We do not want to exaggerate the facts. They are of such enormity that no one can honestly minimize their impact. Even now the Government is callously indifferent. They have lost the confidence of the Bihar Muslims.

Please let me know all the facts.



12. Patel against an Inquiry Commission

Letter from M.K. Gandhi to Vallabhbhai Patel, 5 February 1947
CWMG, Volume LXXXVI, pp. 431–2.

CHI VALLABHBHAI,

...I hear that your opposition is reported to be the reason why the Bihar Ministry does not appoint an inquiry commission.¹ I do not believe the story, but I bring it to your notice. If a commission is not appointed, it will do great harm. The Ministry will be regarded as guilty. If their work has been above board, what harm can the Commission do to them? Considerable pressure is being exerted on me, but I do not go because I have reposed confidence in the Ministers. But if a Commission is not appointed after all, I shall have no choice but to go to Bihar.

Blessings from
 BAPU

¹ In his reply dated February 10, the addressee wrote: 'Who told you I have a hand in the non-appointment of a Commission of Inquiry in Bihar? I do hold the opinion that there is no gain but only harm if the Commission is appointed. If in spite of it a Commission is appointed, how can I prevent it? The Bihar Governor is behind the non-appointment of the Commission. The Viceroy, too, does not want it.' (footnote as in original)

13. Appeal by L.B. Bhopatkar for Defence of Bihar Hindus

Statement by All India Hindu Mahasabha President, 14 February 1947
 AIHM Papers, File No. C-165, NMML.

I, as the President of the All India Hindu Mahasabha, whole-heartedly support the appeal made and request the Hindu public at large to run to the rescue of their ill-starred brethren in Bihar. On reports received by me from disinterested persons and quarters as regards the happenings in Bihar. I feel no hesitation in saying that the Hindus in Bihar, who are proposed to be hauled up on criminal courts on charges of the commission of heinous offences, were more sinned against than sinners themselves. It is really regrettable that the Bihar Government should have fallen an easy victim to the efforts of the Muslim propagandists to exploit the situation. The Hindus of Bihar particularly residing in the village have already terribly suffered at the hands of the different governmental agencies, and to prosecute them now and to fine them collectively will mean, to all intents and purposes, to crush ruthlessly all village life, and to throw their helpless dependents to the tender mercies of the Muslims fanatics. It is therefore, the pious duty of every Hindu to render his co-religionists in Bihar all the help he is capable of and to rescue them from the catastrophe which threatens to engulf them.

L.B. Bhopatkar,
 President
 All India Hindu Mahasabha,
 New Delhi

.....

An Appeal, for the defence and protection of the Hindus in Bihar

The Muslim League propagandists are not tired of making out that the Hindus of Bihar are so sanonly aggressive that the life and property of no Musalman are safe in the Province. The Congress Government, whose policy of appeasing the Muslims at the cost of the Hindus is too well-known to be recounted, has spent lakhs in giving the Musalmans relief and is going to spend several lakhs more to rehabilitate them out of the public ex-chequer, contribution to which is mostly from the Hindus of the Province. The Hindus, who had equally suffered during the disturbances brought about by the obnoxious and aggressive activities of the Muslim League, were not or only denied help but are now being threatened with the imposition of collective fines and institution of Criminal cases on charges of murder, arson, loot, and others. Our information is that a large number of Hindu inhabitants of the villages round about those where the disturbances broke out have been falsely implicated and their number will exceed a lakh. How many of them will be ultimately put on trial is yet to be seen. If the cases are not properly defended a large number of innocent persons will be in the danger of being sentenced to death, transportation for life and hard labour for a long period. Apart from these, the Hindus who have lost their property or earning-member of their family are to be looked after. The attempt of the Muslim League who are working behind the scenes is not only to demoralize the Hindu residents of Bihar but to exploit the situation of helplessness that will be brought about if the leaders and bread-earners in the Hindu families of the rural areas are removed from their midst through sentences in wholesale criminal cases. If things are allowed to drift and the cases go undefended the apprehension is that there will be only women and children left in many villages with the result that can be better imagine than described.

In Bihar, a Committee called the Bihar Hindu Relief and Protection Board, with Mr Nawalkishore Prasad No.1 Advocate as its Chairman, has been formed under the auspices of the Bihar Provincial Hindu Sabha by Dr Shyama Prasad Mookerjee during his last visit to Patna. But the magnitude of the task is such that in the present situation prevailing in the Province enough fund to cope with it cannot be raised from the province alone. We, therefore, appeal to all those Hindus throughout the country who appreciate the sacrifice and sufferings of the Hindus of Bihar to subscribe liberally to the fund and send their generous contribution to Mr R.C. Pandit the Manager of the Bank of Behar, Patna, who is the Treasurer of the Board, Intimations of the sum donated may also be sent to Kumar Ganganand Sinha MLC, President, Bihar Provincial Hindu Sabha, Darbhanga and Mr Nawal Kishore Prasad No.1, Advocate, Chairman of the Bihar Hindu Relief and Protection Board, Kadamkuan, Patna. We trust that the Hindu Sabha organization of the whole country will co-operate with us in the matter and earn the gratitude of their innumerable brethren in Bihar. It must be remembered that charity delayed is charity denied.

Kumar Ganganand Sinha,
President,
Bihar Provincial Hindu Sabha.
Patna.



14. 'League No-Confidence Motion against Bihar Ministry Moved'

Dawn, 14 February 1947.

Patna, Thursday.—The no-confidence motion tabled on 6 February by Mr S.M. Ismail, Leader of the opposition and the Leader of the Muslim League Party in the Bihar Assembly, against the Council of Ministers of Bihar for the policy which was being consistently followed by them before, during and after the recent communal disturbances in the province, was moved in the Bihar Assembly yesterday.

This is the first no-confidence motion brought against a Congress Ministry in India.

Before moving it for the consideration of the House, Mr Ismail wanted to know the period of time that would be given for discussion. Mr Sri Krishna Sinha, the Leader of the House, replying to his query stated that he could just visualize the intensity of feeling behind the motion and did not want, therefore, to stand in the way of the Muslim League members to have their say although he would have like to finish the debate the same day.

However, he stated that if the Muslim League members wanted to have another day for the discussion he would not have any objection.

It was decided ultimately to have a two-day debate on the motion.

There was an unusual influx of visitors in the visitor's gallery yesterday. The rush was so great that some pieces of furniture were broken and there was invasion even on the Press gallery which could not be stopped by the police.

Ladies and young girls in colourful saris filled the women gallery to its utmost capacity and followed the speeches keenly. Some ladies in *burqa* were also present.

There was a flutter in the House and the visitor's galleries, when Mr Amin Ahmed, former member of the Indian Civil Service, stood up to speak in support of the motion after its mover Mr S.M. Ismail.

Mr S.M. Ismail, mover of the no-confidence motion, blamed the Government and its officers for not taking steps in time for preventing what he characterized as the Great Bihar Killing and narrated the history of the communal trouble in the province.

Soon after the Congress Government was formed the Ramnavmi festivals were marked in some parts of the province by minor communal riots, after some time in the capital of the Province itself.

Mr Jaiprakash Narain was taken out in a procession in Patna city in which, the member alleged, slogans inciting the people against the minority community were raised.

Then followed the riots in village Andhana in Bihar Sharif, which formed the subject of an adjournment motion in the last session of the Assembly and the first major communal trouble occurred in Beniabad in Muzaffarpur district in the fag end of September, 1946, and culminated in the series of communal disturbances which had no parallel in history.

It was no pleasure for him, said Mr Ismail, to make allegations against the minority, but what had happened in Bihar must make the Ministers hang their heads in shame. He did not want to discuss the conduct of the Governor on the floor of the House but maintained that he also failed completely in the discharge of his duty.

Inquiry Demanded

Mr Ismail demanded that the Government should appoint an impartial tribunal to investigate into the disturbances; to entrust Muslim officers with the investigation of riot cases; to hunt

down the criminals responsible for the disturbances; to equip at least 10 per cent of the Muslims with arms, and to take steps for the concentration of Muslims in larger pockets.

If the Bihar Government wanted their rehabilitation measures to succeed and wanted to discourage emigration of Muslim population from Bihar they must concede these minimum demands.

‘If you want our co-operation,’ he concluded, ‘give us hope and give us justice. Do not perpetrate the humiliating conditions under which we are living at present.’

Mr Amin Ahmed (Muslim League) who followed opened a frontal attack against the Government of Mr Srikrishna Sinha which he maintained was wholly and solely responsible for the unprecedented carnage in the province.

Mr Ahmed referred to the emigration of three lakhs of Muslims and stated that no amount of propaganda would have persuaded them to take such action, but it was the feeling of insecurity caused by the leniency showed by the Government to persons who had been responsible for the riots.

He had still hopes however, in the Prime Minister, who he thought could make amends by dealing even-handed justice.

If the Government or the Prime Minister felt that they could not discharge their duties, they should vacate office, he contended.

Mr Latifur Rahman (Muslim League) blamed the Congress Government and Congressmen for the disturbances who, he said, had a great hold on the masses.

This had been proved by the fact that as a result of their directive no Muslim was harmed during the great upheaval of 1942. And he inferred, therefore, that the recent riots occurred at their instigation. The fact that the riots were stopped quickly, he said, lent support to his contention.

Confidence Lost

Mrs Zohra Ahmed (Muslim League) said that Bihar had made history as a result of the recent communal riots and written the blackest page in the history of the world. The Ministry had proved, she said, thoroughly incompetent to protect the people under their face and her Party had lost all confidence in them.

Mr Phulan Prasad Verma (Congress Socialist) opposing the motion, said that whatever might be the fault of the Bihar Government, communalism was not one of them. It was unfair to abuse and accuse them for inactions.

Mr Mazhar Imam (Muslim League) charged the Government with dealing leniently with the culprits responsible for the riots and the officers who had neglected their duty in protecting the Muslims.

He cited some instances of Government’s ‘failure’ to punish a number of officers and said that the action of the Government showed that, either they failed to control the people whose representatives they claimed to be and the officers or it was at their instance that the people and officers acted in the manner they did.—API.



15. 'Bihar Casualty Figures'

Dawn, 16 February 1947.

Patna, Saturday.—The following casualty figures of the victims of the Bihar disturbances and the number of houses burnt were given by Mr Sinha, Bihar Premier, in the Legislative Assembly:

Muslims killed:	About 5,000
Muslims injured:	About 1,350
Hindus killed:	About 200
Hindus injured:	12
Hindus killed in firings:	400
Hindus injured in firings:	106
Muslims houses burnt:	4,268
Hindus houses burnt:	424

—API.

16. 'League Party Leader Urges Govt to Do Justice to Oppressed Minority'

Dawn, 17 February 1947.

Patna, Sunday.—**His voice was the voice of the oppressed, suppressed and humiliated Muslims of the province, who would have 'justice from God if not from man,' said Mr S.M. Ismail, Leader of the Opposition in Bihar Assembly and the mover of the no-confidence motion against the Bihar Ministry's policy during and after the riots in the province. He appealed to the Premier to accept his demands.**

Mr Ismail stated that he had no malice or grudge against the Government but he maintained that the Government had been negligent of their duty. He pointed that the highest official of the province during 1942, the Governor of Bihar had been made to resign for his failure to check the disturbances and that the references that the Section 93 Government could not prevent the August disturbances of 1942 had not been happy.

He did not, however, want to compare Mr Sinha's Government with the Section 93 Government, as the present Government was a popular Government from which he had every right to expect equity and justice. He knew he had no power to make the Congress Ministry resign but he wanted the Government to know that they had no confidence in the Muslims of the province.

Sir Chandreshwar Prasad Narain Sinha (Landholders) who opened the debate on Friday in the Bihar Assembly analysed the speeches made in favour of and against the motion and said that there was complete agreement on the point that what happened in October and November 1946 was something for which everybody was sorry and ashamed.

But, the question still remained to be answered, if they were to go down before this disaster or should they put their heads together and rise above it?

Regarding the demands of the Muslim League, Sir Chandreshwar opposed the imposition of heavy collective lines as it would not create a helpful atmosphere and also disfavoured the idea of formation of large pockets of Muslim population as so many small Pakistans would be created.

Mr Jagat Narain Lal (Congress) who had been charged with having a hand in the disturbances for organizing Noakhali Day meetings and processions in Patna stated that what had happened had blackened the name of Bihar but he claimed that whatever he had done had been with the best of motives for maintaining communal harmony. He maintained that he had been able to divert the feeling of the people to heal their channels by his speeches in the meeting held on the Noakhali Day.

Dr Syed Mahmud, Development Minister, said that such communal atrocities merited wholesale condemnation in the name of humanity wherever and by whosoever they were perpetrated.

His heart went out in sympathy to all sufferers whether in Bengal or in Bihar. If communal sympathies blinded people to wider humanitarian principles the future of India either in Pakistan or Hindusthan would be bleak indeed.

Mr Syed Mehdi Hassan, Mr Abdul Ghani, Mr Abu Zakar, Mr M. Burhanuddin and Mr Maqbool Ahmed, all Muslim League members also spoke and gave details of the atrocities and the role of the officials.

Mr Shyam Narain Singh (Congress) opposed the motion. Mr Morris (Anglo-India) said that his heart went out in sympathy to those who had suffered in the riots and condemned all types of communal atrocities.

Premier's Statement

Mr Sinha stated that the latest figure of number of houses of Hindus searched for looted property was 8,059. Giving detailed information about the measures taken by the Bihar Government for the safety and security of the Muslims, Mr Sinha said that it had already been decided to enroll 2,000 constables and a large number of officers to man temporary outposts to be opened in affected areas: in addition there would be reserves of armed police to aid them; there would be a fair percentage of Muslims in these forces.

All District Magistrates had been ordered, Mr Sinha said, to pay sufficient remuneration to chowkidars and to ask them to properly safeguard the property of persons who had evacuated the places under their charge.

Mr Sinha referred to the demand for the creation of larger pockets of Muslim population and asked the Leader of the Opposition to think of the difficulties of the Government in undertaking transfer of population. It was beyond the resources of the provincial Government. But he had decided that those who lived in distant corners of the province and those whose houses had been wiped out and who wanted to live in safer zones would be allowed the liberty to settle wherever they liked.

A general grant of Rs 250, Mr Sinha said, would be made to individuals for rebuilding their houses and the District Magistrates had been asked to grant larger sums wherever necessary. Small traders, craftsmen and business men who had suffered would be given aids to give them a new start in life.

A list of widows and orphans due to the disturbances was being prepared to help them with grants so that they might carry their normal life. Orders had been also issued to all District Magistrates to attend to the work of rehabilitation and officers had been asked to contact the Muslims in villages to give hope and encouragement to them.

The motion was pressed to a division and lost by 92 votes to 27.—API.



17. Bihar Riots

Report by Niranjan Singh Gill, 20 February 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part. II, pp. 45–64.

REPORT ON BIHAR RIOTS

(OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 1946)

BY

NARANJAN SINGH GILL

MAJITHA, DISTRICT AMRITSAR, PUNJAB,

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Part I	Tour outline
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Part IV	Data
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(Appendix [*sic* for Appendices] mentioned are not attached as I had only one copy of each, which I have given to Gandhijee. Appendix [*sic* for Appendices] do not affect the case but they contain extra information and can easily be obtained from Patna, if required.)

PART I

TOUR OUTLINE

Programme

Date

5.2.47 Arrived morning Patna; contacted Muslim League; talk[ed] with Syed Abdul-Aziz; met Mr Jamil (incharge of tour)

6.2.47 Talk [ed with] Col Mahboob, INA; talk [ed with] Red Shirt representative; talk[ed with] Muslim League Leaders, [namely] Mr Jaffar Imam, MLA, President; Mr Badruddin, MLA, General Secretary; Mr Mazhar Imam, MLA, Joint Secretary; Mr Sultanudin, MLA; Prof Najmul Huda and Mr Usmani; met Chief Minister

7.2.47 Met Forward Block workers; met Khaksar, Red Shirt and local Nationalist Muslims; met Baba Gurdit Singh and Sikhs; met Secretary, Unity Board; met Mr A.M. Sahay, INA.

8.2.47 Met Lady Imam; visited Relief Camps; met Badshah Khan Sahib

9.2.47 Visited affected villages of Patna District (Fatwah, Hilsa, Nagar Nausa, Tilhara); met Muslim students

10.2.47 Sent parties to Gaya–Chhapra for report; reached Monghyr; contacted Collector and Muslim League Headquarters

11.2.47 Visited affected villages of Monghyr District (Aahrah, Kharagpore, Tarapore, Lakhanpore, Bishanpore)

12.2.47 Met District Muslim League President; reached Patna

13.2.47 Met Dr Mahmud; met Mr Ansari (Muslim Minister). (Prof Bari out with [Congress] President Kripalani)

14.2.47 Met Mr Yunus; visited Muslim League Headquarters and Relief Camps; attended Assembly debate on riots; met Mr Murli Dhar, MLA (Editor, *Searchlight*); met two enlightened local Hindus

15.2.47 Met a Hindu official in charge of riot work; met Muslim League President and other leaders

16.2.47 Met Gen Shah Nawaz, Dr Mahmud and Badshah Khan Sahib

17.2.47 Met Chief Minister; left for Calcutta.

[PART II (A)]

THE MUSLIM LEAGUE VIEWPOINT

Until a few years ago, the Bihar Muslims were more or less all Nationalists. But as they turned towards the Muslim League ideals of self-determination and Pakistan, they became unpopular with the Hindu majority. After the heavy Muslim League victory in the last elections, Hindus became hostile. Even before the Direct Action Day in August [1946], many acts of aggression by Hindus had taken place, for example, at Andhra in June when eight Muslims were killed for which no one has been punished. Then before the Noakhali [riots] came the incident of Beniabad where a mob of 20,000 attacked and looted this village, killing about 14, amongst whom most were Congress Muslims including Hafiz Mohd Shafi. The League leaders issued a statement on the 2nd October 1946, giving a warning to Government of the serious disturbed feeling. Mahatma Gandhi had asked Hindus not to celebrate *Dewali* for certain reasons, but unscrupulous [elements] spread the story that it was done as mourning for Noakhali. This had a profound adverse effect. The situation was being made worse by speeches, writings and lectures of certain Hindu leaders such as Mr Jagat Narain, MLA, and Mr Murli Dhar, Editor, *Searchlight*. Mr J.P. Narain was adding fire by advocating violence to overthrow the British and their helpmates and then naming the Muslim League as the chief helpmate.

Thus the [Bihar] Government must have been aware of the seriousness of the situation and should have taken adequate steps for the prevention of any large-scale riots. Instead, in spite of Section 144, the Government allowed the holding of Noakhali Day. For two days, 25th and 26th of October, [1946], large meetings and processions, headed by the Congress leaders, were held in Patna and slogans such as *Khun ka badla khun se lenge* (We will avenge blood with blood) were shouted, bringing the crowds to a frenzy point. This was the spark that set the fire.

The riots started on 25th October [1946], and they raged unceasing till about the middle of November. Mass murders, loot, arson, rape, and abductions took place. Brutalities unknown in human history happened such as pressing the child out of a pregnant women, cutting few months [old] babies in front of mothers, and making them drink the blood, all-out killing of women and children, large scale murders in mosque's, and other things. The minimum [number of those] killed is 15,000 and cases of loot[ing], and murder are still taking place. Crops are being stolen. Relief has been totally inadequate. The Hindus are still very hostile. Thus, the Muslims have lost faith in the Government and the Hindus, and they have a hopeless feeling of insecurity. In these circumstances, to ask the Muslims to go back and live as of old is impossible. So the Muslims now want to live in strong-armed pockets and if that is not acceptable, they will have no choice but to migrate.

Other points brought out by them were as follows: the Chief Minister is a good man but even he and other Ministers are unable to control some Hindu leaders and the masses in such a matter for fear of losing their votes and popularity. There are two parties amongst the Congress fighting for power, the Brahmins in the present Government and the Kayastha, the latter being out to bring the former into disgrace and thus this has brought [about] softness and hesitation in Government actions and so [it] failed to prevent riots in spite of the warning. The police either watched silently and in other case actively encouraged the Hindus. Some extreme [*sic* for extremists] (fortunate neither the Muslim League President nor the majority) went on to say that the Hindus want to suppress once for all the Bihar Muslims who so far had been intellectually ahead of the Muslims [*sic* for Hindus]. One Professor even suggested that the Hindus were out to systematically annihilate the Muslims out of the country as they did to the Buddhists and the Spaniards did to Moors.

In the official statement issued by the Bihar Muslim League, they make three demands:

- (a) Exchange of population; this they have now modified to formation of pockets
- (b) Setting up of an impartial Commission; this has already been agreed to and
- (c) Special tribunals to try cases.

NATIONALIST MUSLIMS' POINT OF VIEW

1. The brutalities were extreme.
2. The Government's intentions were good but there was some hesitation in their actions during the riots; a determined lead such as that given by Pandit Nehru would have prevented or at any rate saved huge casualties.
3. The Government's policy and relief measures since the riots, are inadequate, maybe partly due to corrupt or inefficient administration.
4. The Hindus, though now quietened down, are not repentant. So, unless some immediate steps are taken to remedy the situation, it will result in great damage to the cause of the country and the Muslim League is out to exploit the situation fully.

Dr Mahmud: The brutalities, including rape, were extreme. The Congress Nationalist Muslims and the Momins were all murdered just as Muslims, helping to prove the Two Nation Theory. Among the causes were Hindu-Muslim feelings in the administration, exaggerated reports given about Noakhali even by the highest leaders, black marketeers, and the presence of many false [*sic*] workers in the Congress (for example, where there was a good Congressman such as Pandit Grusthwari in Chhapra, all was controlled there quickly and well).

Relief is poor and slow. [The victims of the] Beniabad incident of September [1946] were promised Rs 40,000, [but] still not given; cases of looting are still happening; feelings of insecurity are great; even educated Muslims wishing [*sic* for wish] to leave. Only a few days ago, he received applications from 400 Muslims, some of whom he personally knows as good fellows, wishing to go to Sind.

He feels that out of this evil tremendous good could have come out if we, especially the top Hindu leaders, had grasped the opportunity. Pandit Nehru realized this and he started building a new India (by showing [that] Congress was above all parties and communities) but the attempt had no support. In fact, the unwelcome [*sic*] given to Pandit Nehru by the Bihari Hindus made the Muslims more fearful that even one of the great Hindu heroes may not be able to protect them. No topmost Hindu leaders have toured the afflicted areas. Even now, the wound can be patched up and the effort should be made by the topmost leaders. He thinks

that Gandhijee's immediate visit to Bihar, even though for a few days, might again start the [movement] for a New India. He thinks only Gandhijee can solve the Hindu-Muslim problem, which may become unsolvable [*sic*] after his death.

He related the following three personal stories which show the depth of [his] emotions and speak for themselves:

- (i) An old woman in one of the villages clung to him and said: *Ham ne ka kia hai; ham ko kae ko mare* (What have we done? Why do you kill us?).
- (ii) A group of simple Muslims met him and said: *Ham ko Pakistan men bhej do* (Send us to Pakistan).
- (iii) A group of Muslim refugees protected and brought to the railway station by Hindus were getting into the train with their kits. As the Hindu helpers were entering the railway compartment, a policeman stopped them and asked them why were they getting in, not being refugees. The Hindus answered: *Inke bux Patna kon utarega* (Who would unload their boxes at Patna?)

Ma. Gen Shah Nawaz & Co. Mahboob Ahmad of INA [Indian National Army]: The brutalities were extreme and Noakhali was nothing compared to Bihar. No determined and co-ordinated action was being taken to cover up the wounds. It has already greatly affected the Nationalist Muslims and, unless something was urgently done, the Congress may lose their sympathies. Power politics was perhaps at the background. Shah Nawaz says that a noticeable difference in the Hazara riots was [that there was] no raping or killing of women and children. He also thinks Press is greatly misused. Thinks that Gandhijee should visit Bihar. Both have visions of a great, united and free India and this has come as a terrible shock and an obstacle in their way.

Shah Nawaz is returning from Delhi to work in any capacity here, should Badshah Khan want him.

Badshah Khan Sahib: The British put obstacles in the way of effective dealing of the riots. Whereas to suppress the 1942 riots they sent soldiers in batches of two and three all over the country, they refused to do so now. The Prime Minister himself went to Ranchi to get military support but even then it was delayed. The police joined in to create trouble to please the British officers since there is no mental change in them and they still regard British officers as masters. The Governor went to Bombay to receive his wife when the riots were in full progress. The brutalities were extreme. There was perhaps some softness in the Government's dealing with the riots. It was a mistake to hand over relief work to the Muslim League, who are using this to exploit the situation to their own end, spreading hatred and disunity and creating every obstacle. The relief is totally inadequate and not a single house has yet been rebuilt. Corrupt and inefficient administration is making relief [work] worse.

The Hindu mentality has not changed yet; this is dangerous. Many revolutionaries working [*sic*] pamphlets advocating the killing of Muslims; and Hindu Mahasabha workers are working under Congress label. An immediate action to remedy the situation is required. The principle should be that the Government should do all the needful and the local leaders and citizens should stand on their own legs and carry out all the work. It is a most difficult task with corrupt administration and corrupt character of the so-called Congressmen, but still the locals in each area must be made to realize their responsibility. Outsiders can help the Government and local leaders by helping to give a determined push and bringing about a clear, impartial and rapid relief organization, based on a clear-cut plan and policy. Urgency is obvious, and Badshah Khan is already working in [*sic*] this plan.

HINDU POINT OF VIEW

The brutalities were extreme and the largeness of the riots unexpected, but the cause was strong provocation. The Muslim League leaders had been threatening and constantly speaking of sword. Our leaders were being frequently insulted. Then came the 'Direct Action Day'. Calcutta Riots [took place] in which Biharis from most districts were affected and on the top of it all, Noakhali specially the treatment of women [*sic*]. On the top of this Muslims showed arrogance and in many places in Bihar attacked first; then the masses went mad. They want the Muslims to come back here and hope [that] no incidents to excite [*sic*] the people again will take place anywhere.

Murli Babu, Editor, Searchlight. He did write strong articles but it was to counteract the 'theory of sword' constantly preached by the Muslim League. He never expected such serious riots or barbarity. Calcutta and Noakhali were the immediate main causes. The Noakhali Day was only a condemnation day but slogans were shouted in spite of the efforts of the leaders to stop them. Even before Nehrujee ordered shooting, the police had opened fire 49 times between the 25th of October and the 4th of November.

.... He thinks Muslims attacked first in several places, for example, Tarapore (Police Station), where Hindu girls were molested. He thinks if there were any incidents elsewhere, Hindus may retaliate. He does not see any objections to modified Muslim pockets if they so wish and said (that the) Chief Minister would also place no obstacle.

CHIEF MINISTER'S VIEWS

The main cause of the trouble is the political background and the Muslim League's attitude and actions. The local Muslims also gave provocation and in a number of places were the first aggressors. Nonetheless, suddenness and extent of the riots were totally unexpected. The police force is inadequate to meet such extensive disturbances, and military aid was delayed, maybe deliberately. The Commissioner of Patna asked for military aid on 27th October, [but] without effect. On the 31st, in a conference at the Commissioner's House, the Chief Minister himself asked for military aid.... Even the Inspector-General of Police and the Chief Secretary (both Englishmen) placed obstacles in his way and considered [that] the situation was not really serious. Then he himself went to see the Military Commander at Ranchi. Hence the military aid was delayed for three or four valuable days. In some cases the police did not behave properly and inquiries are being instituted against them, but in good many cases they acted promptly and well. He agrees [that] the police and the administration generally are suffering from the foreign rule legacy. He thinks where the Congress was strong such as in the Tirhut Division, everything was kept [under] control. There is no truth in the Muslim League allegation that caste [*sic*] among the Hindus is making them play power politics and thus weakening the Ministry in maintaining law and order. Nor does he agree that J.P.'s [Jai Parkash Narain's] lectures and statements have contributed to the riots. This he thinks is British propaganda through the Muslim League.

It was a mistake handing over relief to the Muslim League, who have used it for their own purpose. The control is being taken back now; other reason for effective relief not reaching the sufferers is poor administration. Even the English officer appointed by the Central Government for rehabilitation is doing nothing. The Chief Minister was surprised when I told him of the poor relief measures. All the arrests have been more or less made [*sic*]. The Nationalist Muslims have undoubtedly been seriously affected.

When asked if co-ordination of relief between the two provinces would do any good, he said he had not considered it. He agreed that the Hindus were not really repentant yet. His answer to the Muslim League demands was: Inquiry Commission? Yes. Special Tribunals? No. Pockets? As a principle, no, also not practical; but any voluntary adjustments? Yes.

PART II (B)

ASSEMBLY DEBATE

Muslim League no-confidence motion debate took three days. I attended it one day. (Regretfully, what is said in the beautiful Assembly room and [from] its chairs is necessarily [not] what one sees in the villages and among the folks affected.)

PART III (A)

VISIT TO THE AFFECTED VILLAGES PATNA DISTRICT

Nagar Nausa: This village is 29 miles from Patna and is the home of Mr Noman, Member of the Central Legislative Assembly. The battle, including use of guns, raged for three days until the majority of Muslims (over 1,000) were rescued by army firing, after Panditjee arrived.

About 100 Muslims were killed. Muslim houses were adjacent, well built and prosperous. Now [they are] entirely destroyed. [It is] amazing how huge masonry has been blown up as if by dynamite. No Muslim [lives] here except one living with the military. He said his crops have been stolen only a week ago, so how can he live and what for. We escorted two Muslims who found some of their jewellery hidden in the wall. Frames [of houses and other], materials, and other things are being looted even now. (There is) complete destruction (burning) of the Muslim houses. Mosques also broken [*sic*].

3 days' fighting but no police arrived. [Only] one army platoon is posted here.

Local cause: The Hindus say that the Muslims insisted on sacrificing cow in those strained days. The Muslims say they were attacked after peace committees were formed.

Tilhara: It is 45 miles from Patna and two miles from Ekanagar Police Station. Complete Muslim part of the village was destroyed and population murdered. Muslim part of the village here also one side [*sic*]. The mosque broken [into] and many murdered inside. Blood, hair, and bones inside the mosque. Each house has a well; all of them were filled up, it is said, with bodies and debris. In some skeletons [were] visible. Heavy blood marks in all houses. The butchery obviously horrible and evidence still there—three wooden planks top-bloodsmeared—presumably persons were cut on these.

One well, half a mile outside the village, [was] full of skeletons, some visible on top [*sic*]. No Muslim living anywhere near [by].

MONGHYR DISTRICT V

Aahrah: Is 12 miles from Monghyr. 148 deaths [took place], 56 Muslims escaped. Saw wells full up [*sic*], some bones visible. The Hindu and Muslim parts in the village separate, the latter completely destroyed. No Muslims seen in the area. The Muslims evacuated even [from the areas] where they were protected. One Muslim, Habib Khan, killed 15 days ago.

Murahi: The mosque and the total [*sic* for whole] village burnt. Nobody living. 130 including 40 men killed. Here, 200 men went to the police station and cowardly left [behind] their womenfolk who were never rescued but some escaped through crops [*sic*].

Lakhanpore: 600 Muslim houses complete burning and destruction of the houses, majority Muslims killed [*sic*]. Blood marks, bones, hair visible in the houses. One house smells of dead bodies, even now horrible sight, mosque also destroyed.

Bishanpore: Total village destroyed. Heaviest [*sic*] murders because considered a Muslim stronghold. Here, every house tells its tale of the dead. Every house, including the mosque, has blood marks and bones and burning of dead bodies. I walked around this village in the fields for half a mile and found the whole area full of skeletons and graves every few yards. Too terrible for words. Muslim school destroyed.

Ghazipore: In the Lakhanpore and Bishanpore villages, Muslims were sent back by order, otherwise no rations. Theirs is a pitiable state; no roofs, no materials. Each home graveyard with bones of their own kith and kin, and yet they have to live there. Truly, villages of dead even those who are walking about [*sic*]. They should never be there until the cleaning of the area, burial or disposal of the dead, rebuilding of the houses and some relief has taken place. Nothing has been done yet. This scene will remain a nightmare of my life....

PART III (B) REFUGEE & RELIEF CAMPS

Patna

Digha Camp 1,740 refugees,

Food	Rice 6 <i>chhatak</i> , vegetable 3 <i>chhataks</i> , <i>dal</i> 3 <i>chhataks</i> . Adequate but nothing special for children
Clothing	1 blanket often to a whole family. 1 blanket for 6 men
Sanitation	Up to refugee standard
Medicines	Poor
Water	OK
Accommodation	<i>Pukka</i> building

City Camp 2,100 refugees

Food	As for the Digha Camp above
Clothing	1 blanket per person to some; none to others. Some issued a <i>sari</i> or a shirt each, others none, even though [they are] there for 3 months
Medicines	Sufficient
Water	OK
Sanitation	OK
Accommodation	OK <i>pukka</i> building

City Anjuman-i-Islamia Camp

Food	Ditto
Clothing	1 blanket per person but not to all; no issue of clothing

Monghyr District

Kharagpur [Camp] 2,000 refugees

One refugee recently taken for work and killed. He was a tailor named Kalu Khan of Pajiti village but killed in the neighbouring village of Matmata.

Rations	5 <i>chhataks</i> of rice, 3 <i>chhataks</i> of vegetable etc.
Clothing	Poorly dressed, no special issues
Accommodation	Tents
Tarapur [Camp]	1,800 refugees
	Saw terrible wounds on women and children. They said I was the first non-Muslim leader to visit them and now they badly needed sympathy.
Rations	4 <i>chhataks</i> of rice, 2 <i>chhataks</i> of <i>dal</i> , 1 <i>chhatak</i> of vegetable (all inadequate). Clothing 11/2 yds. per head
Blanket	1 per 4 persons
Water	Poor arrangements
Sanitation	Poor
Medicines	Insufficient
Lighting	Bad
Accommodation	Overcrowded tents

Note. In none of the camps had any effort been made to cheer up the camp [or inmates] provide games for children or some education. Generally the camps presented a dismal appearance....

SUMMARY

The riots started on 25 October and brought under control by 8 November.

	Total Casualties	Press re[ports] of Assembly debates
Muslims killed	4,956	5,000
Muslims wounded	1,162	1,350
Hindus killed	337	200
Hindus wounded	331	312
		(Hindus killed by firing 400, injured 312)
Total houses searched	8,000	
Total Hindus arrested	5,200	
Total Muslims arrested	300	
Under detention not bailed	2,500	
Muslims' houses destroyed	4,268	
Hindus' houses destroyed	424	

(The P[rime] Minister thought that most of the culprits have been rounded up.) Special police force of 2,000 is being enrolled and posted in temporary outposts for protection.

PART V

CONCLUSION V

Note. The Muslims form 13 per cent of the population and generally are in a prosperous condition. I have tried to see the Muslim point of view who are the sufferers here and to ascertain facts; and I write with the sole object of how we can heal the wounds and do maximum good. All my remarks should be read in that light, for the work in hand is of such a humane nature that it should transcend all party politics.

CAUSES

Basic Causes

The basic cause is the political background and moves. The British have cleverly succeeded in their policy of divide and rule, and loom large behind all the happenings. While talking about democracy and progress, they have introduced the cursed system of 'Separate Electorates' which is the very negation of democracy. Thus, offering power based on separation and religion, they have created its logical sequence—disunity and hatred. The British administration in India, that is, the British officers collectively and individually, have never ceased to play this game and, as will be seen later, this happened during the Bihar riots also.

The Muslim League (justified or not, is out of the scope of this port) is unfortunately playing this game. While it is beginning to dawn on the mankind that the basic teachings of all the religions are brotherhood and equality of man irrespective of caste, creed, colour or belief, and while civilization is rightly progressing towards a world federation, here in India we have a retrograde cry of dividing up India, based on religion (but how can true religion teach that?), thus sowing seeds of endless enmity and hatred for posterity. This attitude of the Muslim League, plus violent talk of its leaders advocating the cult of sword, has had its effects on the Hindu community and is the major cause of our troubles, and unfortunately it is tending to become worse. So it follows that unless this cause is removed, other efforts to improve the situation can only be of a secondary nature.

That India is one whole is even proved by these riots, as cause [*sic*] in one part of the country had its effects in other [parts]. To this extent, it can be said that it is outside the control of the Provincial Governments to check the causes and [their] effects. It may also be said that this India needs a strong, united Centre, capable of healing wounds inflicted upon any part of it instead of the limbs of the same body non-co-operating and thus hurting themselves and the whole body.

Immediate [Causes]

In Bihar the tension perhaps took a different turn since the elections in early 1946. The Muslim League won a heavy victory but they themselves admit that they used very insulting and provoking [*sic*] propaganda. There may have been other minor incidents but there was nothing special to worry [about]. Then came the 'Direct Action Day' and the Calcutta Riots. Calcutta has Biharis from every district, so the effects spread throughout Bihar. In September, the Beniabad incident took place when a large Hindu mob attacked and looted this place, killing about 14, among whom most were Congress Muslims. Then came Noakhali, about which perhaps exaggerated news was given by some leaders and the press. It was not so much the killing as mass rape and conversion that hit the Hindu mind. There appears to have been some local provocation in some areas by the Muslims also who may have gloated over Noakhali. I understand many officials had reported increasing tension during the last three months, but the IG of Police and the Chief Secretary (both Englishmen) had not taken any serious notice of these reports. Under the circumstances, the observance of the Noakhali Day appears to have been a mistake as this set the fire. It is admitted by all that such slogans as *Khun ka badla khun se lenge* (We will avenge blood with blood) were shouted by large crowds in Patna.

GOVERNMENT APPRECIATION

I have no doubts about the good intentions of the Government. After the Beniabad incident, the emergency scheme had been put into action. Celebration of the 2nd of September had been banned in order not to antagonize the Muslims. But the Government failed to appreciate the mass feelings and tension (in which misappreciation they were helped deliberately or otherwise by the I.G. [of Police] and Chief Secretary) and were caught unawares by the suddenness and largeness of the riots.

RIOTS (25 OCTOBER–8 NOVEMBER)

In general, there is little doubt that the riots were spontaneous and the result of pent-up feelings, and that the Government and the leaders were caught unawares by the extensiveness of the disturbances. *Goondas*, communalists, demobbed soldiers (after-effects of War) and similar people made full use of the opportunity and the crowds went mad. Murders, looting and arson took place on a large scale. Brutalities and destruction were extreme, such as perhaps had never happened in the Hindu history. It was difficult for me to check up regarding rape and conversion in the short time available but *all* Muslims say that rapes [were committed] on a large scale and there are still many abductions. Conversions, if any, have perhaps been on a minor scale [only]. Even the official list of the 5,000 persons killed is bad and serious enough, but the casualties are probably somewhat more.

All aspects of such disgraceful riots are bad enough, but call for special mention of regret, namely, (a) large-scale killings of women and children, (b) killings just of Muslims, no matter whether they were Congressites, Nationalists or Leaguers, thus helping to prove the Two Nation Theory.

The comparative seriousness of riots in various areas was affected by the following considerations:

- (a) Where there was lack of communications, military or police aid was delayed.
- (b) The attitude and actions of local leaders and leading citizens.
- (c) The efficiency or otherwise of local officials.
- (d) Local relations between the two communities.

GOVERNMENT ACTION

Since the Government was caught unawares, there was a natural hesitation in realizing its seriousness and in dealing with it most effectively. Other possible reasons for some softness in the Government action may be:

- (a) Hesitation to antagonise the Hindu masses.
- (b) Services are not free from communal feelings.
- (c) The administration is the legacy of the British, who have been taught only to please their masters, rather than act impartially and effectively on their own initiative as should be the case in free countries.
- (d) The wrong appreciation and advice by important British officials, the IG [of Police] and the Chief Secretary, who, as late as the 31st [of October], argued with the Premier that the situation was not serious and so, together with the Military Commander, delayed military aid. It is illuminating to know here that whereas in 1942 the military was spread all over the province in twos or threes, the Military Commander refused

to adopt that method now though that was the very thing asked by the Chief Minister. It is also surprising that the Governor should go to receive his wife in Bombay on the 31st when riots were mounting up.

Nonetheless it would be correct to say that the Government acted with average efficiency and with the best of intentions.... Firing by the police had taken place before Pandit Nehru's arrival. But his visit accomplished the following two purposes:

- (a) It brought military into action.
- (b) It added determination to the Government actions.

Both of them could and perhaps should have been accomplished by the Government themselves and this may have brought the riots under-control much earlier.

(Muslims in general are of the opinion that Pandit Nehru's arrival and action saved many thousands of Muslim lives and they are grateful to him).

POST-RIOT POSITION (9 NOVEMBER–17 FEBRUARY)

Relief. It is a sad fact that relief arrangements are poor. Whatever may be the paper schemes or orders issued, the effect on the actual sufferers is totally inadequate. The rations are adequate but not at all the places. Children are given no special facilities. Clothing is the worst point. No rebuilding of the houses has started [yet]. Camps show a dismal sight; no effort of recreation [*sic*] etc. is visible. Dr Mahmud told me that the Beniabad sufferers of September 1942, who had been promised Rs 40,000 [as] compensation, had still not received it. This has a very demoralizing effect and helps the Muslim League object much more than their own propaganda.

The loot of material (doors, frames, boxes, and other things) and of crops is still going on. Some Muslims individually have been found missing or hurt recently also.

The Government in general allowed the Muslim League to run the relief [work]. This was a mistake as (a) the Government must never shirk [from] its rightful duty and (b) the League (primarily there from outside Bihar) has exploited the position for its ends, spreading disunity and hatred. Their leaders come and make speeches, [indulge in] politics, [and arrange] and relief. Systematically they advocated migration, which is most harmful to the Muslims themselves. Finding it impractical, they (Bihar Muslim League) now advocate strong-armed pockets and are carrying out all propaganda to this effect, with one-sided stories. Other possible reasons for inefficient relief may be:

- (a) power politics (matching Bengal);
- (b) corrupt administrative machinery; and
- (c) poor Congress workers.

But the fact is that it is the lack of good relief arrangements more than the League propaganda that is making the Muslims feel insecure, making them wish to form pockets or even leave the province.

The Government's answer to the Muslim League demands has already been given, namely,

- (a) *Inquiry Commission:* Yes (it has created good effect even in the Muslim quarters).
- (b) *Pockets:* No, except in special cases. Regarding pockets, it is true that even now there are limited Hindu and Muslim areas in towns and villages. But it must be realized that

in Bihar most damage has been done where there were so-called pockets and Muslims have collected together. An argument not easy to refute in favour of pockets is how can those who were dishonoured go back and live in houses which are cemeteries of their own kith and kin. The pocket principle, however, is against the real interests of both Muslims and Hindus, but where the people concerned really voluntarily want to live together, let them do so. The choice should be of the people, not of political parties.

- (c) *Special Tribunals*: No. The above is OK but the fact is to take relief, consolation, and friendship to the sufferers and none of the above do that.

The problem is, therefore, *most urgent* and the effect of the policy must reach the masses earliest possible. The Muslim League is justified in claiming that relief has been inadequate.

SOME IMPORTANT COMMENTS

The Congress or Nationalist Muslims have been deeply agitated and find themselves in a most difficult position. I fear that unless the problem is courageously tackled from the highest to the lowest level, it may be driving them into the League's arms. It is really said that Nationalist Muslims and Momins (Mr A.Q. Ansari, a Momin) were killed just like others simply because they were Muslims, even though they stood with the Congress.

Hindus are quiet, but it cannot be said that they are repentant; and incidents elsewhere may still create effects here. This is a *serious* aspect. So, the Muslim feeling of insecurity has a good foundation.

SUMMARY

The British game has been successful. Indians stand ashamed before the eyes of the world and that too when the masses of India, be they Hindus or Muslims, in reality care not for Pakistan or Hindustan except superficially or artificially. What they want is good clothing, simple decent living for them and their families. This really can only be had if India arises [*sic* for rises] as one strong country for both its own and the world's benefit. But at the moment both the British and the Muslim League perhaps are sitting back satisfied that their case of the Two Nation Theory is proved and Mr Nishtar is going about making violent speeches that a handful of Muslims will conquer and rule over crores of Hindus. And I know the general feeling among the Hindus, and to some extent share them too, that brute like actions can only be met by force, that when animal nature in human beings predominates, they understand not the feelings of love but learn a quick lesson from punishment. But young India must rise above this, look upward and ahead, fight these obstacles and even that without falling into the trap of violence and retaliation. I can see no other way of accomplishing this except that the Hindus (perhaps right [ly] too being majority) once more will have to bear the brunt of hard work and sacrifice for the sake of India, for the sake of both Hindus and Muslims alike and itself be, all the purer and better after the ordeal. I feel also that this great [tragedy] will bring forward [*sic*] the best or the reality of Islam, thus paving the way for both to live as brothers and equals, each developing [to its] best and helping mankind and civilization in its onward march.

There are some silver linings too. Many Muslims were saved by Hindus just as a number of Hindus were saved by their Muslim friends in Noakhali. The Muslim League leaders and the simple Muslim refugees met me very pleasantly. Quite a number of them (in spite of the propaganda to the contrary) after a few minutes' talk were willing to go back if only decent

arrangements could be made. I found Mr Jaffar Imam, President of the Muslim League, as a very reasonable and rationally [*sic* for rational] man and so were a number of others, of the Muslim League view, such as Mr S.A. Aziz. Then Bihar has excellent Muslims such as Dr Mahmud, Prof Bari, and Col Mahboob (INA). So, why should the problem not be solved?

18. Bihar Situation

Letter from H.S. Suhrawardy to M.A. Jinnah, 26 February 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 93–104.

BENGAL SECRETARIAT, CALCUTTA

My dear Quaid-i-Azam,

You may be interested in the report given by Sardar Naranjan Singh Gill of what he saw in Bihar. The Sardar Sahib does not want his report to be used until he has received the comments of the Premier of Bihar. I sent the Sardar Sahib to Bihar and refused to discuss with him matters regarding Noakhali unless he visited Bihar.

I also send you a copy of my own report on the Bihar situation which I have gathered as a result of my visit to Bihar and my discussion with the Premier there; also a copy of a letter which I have written to him. You may be interested in these, particularly in the report of Sardar Naranjan Singh Gill, which does not hesitate to bring out the terrible atrocities committed by the Hindus.

I also enclose a copy of a letter, which I have written to Sir Frederick Burrows and which is my first reaction to the statement of HMG.

Yours sincerely,
 SHAHEED SUHRAWARDY

Enclosure 1

A NOTE ON BIHAR BY HUSEYN SHAHEED SUHRAWARDY

In spite of my best efforts to be optimistic regarding rehabilitation of Muslims in Bihar, I feel that there is little to justify any great hope in that direction. I fear that the Ministry are not taking adequate steps to reassure the Muslims of the province that their lives and properties will be safe at the hands of their Hindu neighbours or that the Muslims will receive adequate protection. I do not think that the Ministers have realized the extent to which the confidence of the Muslims has been shaken in the ability, if not the desire, of the Government to protect them and to take offensive action against Hindu aggressors. The view generally held, not only by non-officials but also by officials, is that more than 5,000 persons were killed in the riots. Their minimum estimate is 8,000 but [it could well be up to] 15,000. It is further admitted that most of the persons killed were women and children. It is also admitted that the atrocities perpetrated have no parallel in history. It is purely brutal and brutish savagery. Even primitive people would not have stooped to the brutalities performed by the Hindus of Bihar. Butchering of little children and babies in arms became a normal course of events. The account of how the head of a suckling child was cut off while it was, feeding from the mother's breast and [of] how a mother's breast was cut off while the child was suckling, is disquieting: [these are] accounts which Mr Gandhi refuses to believe and which have been falsely denied by some of his informants. It is regrettable that Mr Gandhi himself has either refused to credit any of these

stories or deliberately made up his mind that he will not under any circumstances do so. One can quite understand why Mr Rajendra Prasad has tried to assure Mr Gandhi that everything is all right in Bihar and that he need not go there.

2. As I have said above, the Ministry does not realize to what extent the Muslims have lost confidence in the Ministry and in the Hindus. Over and over again, the Premier has stated that the reason why the people had left Bihar was due to the propaganda by the members of the Muslim League who had been entrusted with the task of supervising Relief Camps and who, according to him, had betrayed their trust by calling upon the people to leave Bihar in order to make the tragedy appear worse than it actually was and to get some political advantage. To my mind such an attitude only shows his incapacity or unwillingness to realize the extent of the tragedy and the repercussions on the Muslim mind. It also shows a complete want of imagination and a desire to find scapegoats for his own failures. He gave some stray cases of how refugees ran away from the Digha Camp when it was in the charge of the Muslim League, and of how Muslims left unaffected localities long after the incidents had ceased. For instance, he gave the example of the town of Barh from which there has been a general [Muslim] exodus. Within the town itself, there were only a few incidents but round about it nearly all the villages have been decimated. This the Premier refuses to realize. I pointed out to him over and over again that he should realize that persons are not likely to leave their hearths, their homes, their lands and their property and everything dear to them merely on account of political propaganda. He had, however, made up his mind to blame the Muslim League. It is difficult with such an attitude of mind for the Ministry to take adequate steps to reassure the Muslim population.

3. I placed certain suggestions before the Premier, most of which he could not accept because he still thinks that life can proceed in the normal way. In my view, the steps that he is taking are wholly insufficient to get the Muslims back and there seems to be no alternative left to the Government of Bengal but to take steps to settle the Muslim refugees of Bihar as soon as possible and take them out of Relief Camps.

4. Up till now the Bihar Ministry has done nothing except talk. I believe it is only recently that they have accepted the view that the Muslims who lived in villages where there were only a few Muslim houses and where the vast majority has been wiped out cannot be expected to go back to those villages. It is only recently that they have agreed to houses being built in villages where Muslims still exist, so that persons from these outlying villages may find some shelter. I was informed that Muslims round about [sic] Lakhanpur were prepared to come, live in Khanpore, keep their wives and children there and put up huts for themselves in the fields and live there at the risk of their lives. No houses have yet been erected. I have requested that these houses should be erected before the rains set in. It is doubtful, however, if this will cater for the refugees of those villages which have been destroyed. It may help the Muslims of those areas round about [sic] who are still in the soil but feel unsafe in the event of an uprising. This is about the most that I could [say] of the constructive work being done by the Ministry. Nobody is taking advantage of the offer of Rs 250 for erecting houses. It may be noted here that the houses demolished in Bihar were far more substantial than those demolished in Noakhali and Tippera. I just cannot see what the Ministry has done which can induce the Muslims to go back. I understand that collective fines are now being imposed for incidents now taking place. Up till now not more than ten times the *Panchayat* rent or *Chowkidari* tax has been imposed although. I am told that recently up to forty times has been recommended. There is also a move to get hold of the bad characters and make them responsible for looking after the property of the Muslims in the affected areas. This, as we can see, will not carry anybody

far because when their houses were abandoned whatever was left behind was looted. These are all the measures.

5. The Ministry has turned down the suggestion for the creation of pockets of defence. But it seems that it will not stand in the way of Muslims finding a habitation in areas where they still exist. They [Ministry] are not, however, prepared to find land for them [Muslims] to put up a habitation on. I suggested that they [Government] should purchase land in order to enable these Muslims to put up [their] households. The Premier made it a condition that it will [only] be applicable to those Muslims whose houses have been destroyed in villages where Muslim houses were few. The Premier was not agreeable to consolidation of holdings or exchange of lands. It is not possible for the Muslims to go to their lands and cultivate them and it is no use the Premier expecting them to do so. There are stories of persons who had returned who have been assaulted and killed, and there is a general story of boycott and of hatred and oppression and also taunts, which make it impossible for the Muslims to return to their previous homes. I think the Premier should be asked to set up an organization that would act as an intermediary so that the lands of the Muslims who want to sell them may be purchased by the Government at proper rates and compensation given to the Muslims accordingly. These lands would subsequently be sold to the neighbouring Hindus. If this is not done, then I think the Muslims will have to sell their lands for a paltry price or abandon their lands which ultimate will be encroached upon. As a matter of fact, many lands given out in *batwara* are now being claimed by the local Hindus as having been given to them on rent and, therefore, they are claiming permanent rights thereon. There are also *bakasht* lands, which are now passing out of control of Muslim *zamindars*. Some sort of a final Arbitration Board has been set up. The Hindus claim these *bakasht* lands of the Muslims, and the Muslims are not there to contest. In spite of what the Premier said, I have very definite information that the Muslims are back. It is greatly to be regretted that the Ministry is not carrying on any propaganda in that area to induce them to do so. The Premier agreed that bail had largely been given to persons who had been arrested, and he said that where necessary. He further stated that he had ordered an increased police force of 2,000 and had agreed to 25 per cent of them being Muslims, either from Bihar or from UP and Ballia, But that he was not getting any Muslims. Also, the remuneration of *chowkidars* is being increased so that they may guard Muslim properties....

SUGGESTIONS MADE TO THE PREMIER

- (i) Villages where there were few Muslim houses (some are wholly destroyed) inhabitants cannot be expected to go back. What can we do about them and their lands?
 - (a) Build houses for them in adjacent Muslim localities.
 - (b) Arrange (through the Relief and Rehabilitation Department) for exchange of lands.
- (ii) Rebuild houses (partially damaged) where Muslims still exist. [Steps mentioned in (i) and (ii) [above must be taken] before the rains.
- (iii) In order to build [houses] for Muslims, we need homestead lands for them. [How to secure such land?]
 - (a) Acquire?
 - (b) Exchange?
 - (c) Pay money to enable [them] to purchase lands (and put up houses) for two categories [of Muslim affectees] according to the Hon'ble Prime Minister:

- (1) Those whose villages have been wholly or almost wholly wiped out.
- (2) Where there are a few Muslim houses in a village.

(iv) lands of

- (a) widows
- (b) all [those] killed
- (c) those who cultivated [land] by their own labour
- (d) those who cultivated [land] by *bhagidars*.

Is exchange possible?

- (v) Police: For some time at least, get Punjabi Muslims or Afridis
- (vi) Arms for Muslims
- (vii) Muslims—their future—what assurances?
- (viii) Necessary propaganda against Hindus—that they must accept Muslims
- (ix) Engage more Muslims in the rehabilitation work
- (x) Orphanages
- (xi) Widow Homes
- (xii) Cases: hardly any arrest (accused bailed out)
- (xiii) Special constables and [their] responsibility

The Premier agreed to build houses in adjacent Muslim localities and to rebuild houses where partially damaged and where Muslims still exist. He was not prepared either to acquire land or to [arrange] exchange [of] land to build homesteads for Muslims. I do not think he will be prepared to give money to enable them to purchase lands. In any event, if he did put up houses for them on lands in Muslim localities, he would do so only for those villages where there are few Muslim houses. He was not prepared to do anything to exchange the lands of widows, of persons who have been killed or of those who cultivated [land] with their own labour and who cannot go back to their land, or who cultivated [it] by *batwara*. I wonder if the Ministry would be agreeable to realizing the rents for the benefit of the landlords in *nij jot ryot* and *bakasht* lands.

The Premier was not prepared to bring in Punjabi Muslims or Afridis as police. He said that the Hindus would resent it in view of what took place in 1942. It was clear that he was more anxious for Hindu sentiment than to reassure Muslims. He was not prepared to give arms to Muslims for their protection. As regards future assurances, it appeared that he was hoping that the Muslims would begin to return with the passage of time. How could they stay away leaving their properties behind, [he asked]. He was agreeable to carrying out the necessary propaganda amongst the Hindus. However, it still remains to be seen whether he will do so or not.

He was not prepared to engage Muslims in rehabilitation work. He is practically trying to give some relief through Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and carrying on anti-Muslim League propaganda through him. According to him, it is the Muslim League, which must be held responsible for the Hindus attacking Muslims. Why did the Muslim League raise the slogan of Pakistan, [he asked]. Through Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan he is carrying on propaganda that Muslims must desert the Muslim League, as Muslim League is responsible for what is taking place.

It appears that the proposal of Orphanages and Widow Homes has not yet struck him. He will probably put up Orphanages and Widow Homes.

He said that about 6,000 persons have been arrested and he said that 3,000 persons are in *hajat*. This is not the report of the local people.

7. Although our conversation was fairly cordial, as I had no desire to pick up a quarrel with the Premier and I had not gone there with the intention either of accusing him or of teaching him his business or anything of the kind, I must confess that I was deeply disappointed at the general attitude of the Premier and the Ministry. I see little hope of the Government of Bihar taking any big step, which may induce the Muslims to go back to Bihar. Something spectacular was necessary [but] that the Premier would never do. On the other hand, there is every fear that the European elements will leave the Bihar Service *en masse*. Muslim officers are all apprehensive. The Bihar Service would be manned almost wholly by Hindus and this is not likely to create any great confidence in the future. I was surprised to find that the Premier and the Muslim League there had no contact with each other at all. The Muslim League had written to him for further discussions. He had replied to the effect that he would meet them in the beginning of February but up till now he has not met them. He has agreed to take them into confidence. This was my last request....

Enclosure 3

CALCUTTA

My dear Governor,

I am taking the liberty of writing to you this letter which is more in the nature of thinking aloud than of constructive suggestions. It appears to me that we have got to do a terrific amount of work in order to prepare ourselves for June 1948. The problems will be very much greater if there is no settlement between the League and the Congress. The alternatives appear to be the following:

- (a) A settlement between the League and the Congress. The League going to the Constituent Assembly and co-operating with the Congress and working out a scheme also entering into the Minorities Advisory Committee! in order to draft safeguards for the interests of all minorities.
- (b) Each province setting up its own independent organization particularly in Sections B and C. In our Section we shall have to draft a separate constitution as it is not likely that we shall get the Government of Assam, as at present constituted, to agree to work with us or even to hand over any of its Bengali territories.
- (c) Pakistan Constitution. It seems to me that this is the alternative, which the HMG has visualized but not specifically mentioned. This is likely to take shape. This, however, does not exonerate us from having our own constitution and working out our own provincial plans.

2. Constitution-making is not so difficult but the question of agreements and treaties with others and to what extent we have to rely upon them are of very great importance. If we are going to be independent, it appears to me that the following problems must be tackled at once.

- (a) Defence. We have got to have an Army as well as military education, military bias, military training, a territorial force, conscriptional training for two years, officers' training establishment and so on.
- (b) Workshops for making guns and munitions.

- (c) Shipbuilding yards in Calcutta and Chittagong for small and large craft.
- (d) Arrangements for making armoured vehicles and tanks. It may be necessary, therefore, to control the steel works and factories under our jurisdiction so that they may produce the necessary kind of steel material.
- (e) Self-sufficiency in food grains and, therefore, a more intensive programme of Grow More Food.
- (f) A survey of deficiencies in foodgrains, such as mustard oil, *ghee*, groundnuts, salt, pulses, linseed, sugar, and other things, and devising ways and means of how to supplement them.
- (g) A survey of all our industries from the point of view of making ourselves self-sufficient in necessary commodities; for instance, cloth, iron and steel, cement, oils, and others.
- (h) A general survey of our industries and a programme of industrial development by attracting foreign capital and industrial enterprise.
- (i) Control of jute cultivation, sale and purchase of the jute industry and also of jute manufactures.
- (j) Finances of the province and how to make ourselves self-sufficient.
- (k) Currency.
- (l) Customs.
- (m) Transport.
- (n) Requisite proportion of Muslim and Hindu officers in the administration of the province in all its branches. We may have to get rid of those on whose support we cannot rely in moments of crisis, such as Gurkhas, Assam Rifles, and the UP and Bihari Hindus in the Armed Forces and [in the] Police Force.
- (o) The Government's authority is bound to be shaken and considerably undermined. It is not possible for the Government to have a Police Force that will cover the entire province. It is necessary to think of ways and measures of assuring protection to the people likely to be in jeopardy in the event of a mass uprising.

3. There are thousands of other problems I am stunned by [HMG's] announcement [of 20 February 1947]. It will be easy for a settled Government to take over from the British Government. That could be done almost immediately. But if a new constitution has to be framed, that is to say, if there is going to be separation and division, then it is clear that much work will have to be done. The Muslims may feel happy that it is suggested that power may be handed over to the province but I doubt if the provinces will be sufficiently organized by June 1948 to be able to stand on their own legs as an independent entity. Hence practically this is tantamount to forcing us to accept the Centre.

4. The most important thing is that we must get hold of jute and tea. These are the only two things with which we can barter with the other provinces. For instance, in order to develop our river system, it is necessary to come to an agreement with Bihar, Assam and even Burma. If they refuse to do so, what have we got with which to coerce them? This will surely have to be worked out.

5. These thoughts are rather puerile, but they are the first reactions of a person who, while believing in independence, also believes that sometimes too high a price may have to be paid. Also, no attention has yet been paid by anyone regarding the problems that will arise if separation is also coupled with independence. Hence I have no knowledge and no experience.

6. Would it not be advisable to set up some sort of organization or Committee or Special Officer that will advise on the basis of an independent constitution for Bengal? Maybe we shall not need it but it will nevertheless be useful, if not in its constitutional aspects, [certainly] in its economic and financial aspects.

Yours sincerely,
H.S. SUHRAWARDY

HE Sir Frederick Burrows, GCIE,
Governor of Bengal

19. 'Little Progress towards Recovery: Official Apathy in Bihar'

Extracts from a Report from *Dawn*, 27 February 1947

Bihar is suffering from a morbid condition which it seems to lack the will to shake off. There is a lethargy in all branches of the administration that is puzzling to those who looked, with the coming of Congress into power, for a revival of energies; there is a malaise abroad that is disquieting to those who remember how much leeway has to be made up after the hardship and denial of the war years, how much healing to be done after disturbances of last November, writes a Special Correspondent of the 'Statesman' who has been lately in Bihar.

In Patna, inquiries in official circles about progress made with repairing the damage done four months ago arouse scant interest—even thinly veiled resentment, as if they would rather not be reminded of that legacy. It is an escapism that is disquietingly widespread. Accurate statistics of persons displaced by the riots are strangely difficult to obtain. Estimates vary from the ridiculous 25,000 of the Government's curious Publicity Department to the Muslim League's exaggerated 400,000. Officials engaged on rehabilitation work put it at 175,000—probably a conservative estimate, for 150,000 refugees are admitted by Hindu Mahasabha sources to be in Bengal alone. Most of the remainder have shifted about within Bihar itself, only very small numbers going to other provinces like Sind.

Marks of Tragedy

So little progress has been made towards recovery that it is difficult for a visitor to believe that almost four months have passed since tragedy seared its way across a large part of the province. In villages a few miles from Patna, the administrative hub whence succour must come, the illusion of immediacy is complete. There all the marks of tragedy are as fresh as if it had happened, but yesterday.

In the peaceful sunlit Bihar countryside charred and deserted houses still huddle in stork and incongruous ruin, their courtyards cluttered with torn paper and rifled tin trunks, their rooms filled with smashed furniture and tiles from collapsed roofs, their verandahs strewn with women's slippers and broken bangles. Everywhere the pattern is the same—the sign of past violence and the present quiet, underlined by the wind in the trees overhead or a gurgling stream nearby.

Muslims in Patna like to take visitors to these villages on conducted tours and there re-live the horror all over again. They would resent the suggestion that this is sheer futility. Futility is a very large part of Bihar's attitude towards the thousands of her peasants who have been torn from their homes and see no prospect of return. Tragically, they have become pawns in the political game.

The Problem of Return

Leaguers say refugees cannot be expected to go back to their homes because of the horrible associations, because evidence in cases against miscreants would be stopped by intimidation, because many 'murderers' have been released on bail and are going about again and, lastly, because no rebuilding has been done.

Many of these obstacles to resettlement are real, but Leaguers go further. They say that the only solution is to have Muslim 'pockets' in Bihar—villages of from 5,000 to 10,000 Muslims, ten per cent of them armed with their own police stations, schools and even (frontier fashion) watch towers—in short, defence areas in a hostile country, Meanwhile League funds are assisting Muslims to leave the province.

The Government understandably refused to create these 'little Pakistans'. But it went, unwisely, to the other extreme and insisted (certainly up to the time of the Assembly debate) that the refugees go back to their original villages. This, it had become obvious, after four months, they would not do out of fear—fear that is in most cases well founded. There is still communal hostility in some villages which even a foreign visitor can feel....

Unpleasant truth

The unpleasant truth is that whatever the province's legislators may say in the isolation of the capital's Assembly chamber, there has been no change of heart in the villages and towns of Bihar and the visitor looks in vain in both Hindu and Muslim circles for some genuine feeling for the province's 175,000 displaced persons, some realization that their resettlement is an urgent, humanitarian problem, not a political one, some effective and selfless championship of the ignorant, bewildered homeless, tragic peasant of Bihar.

20. Gandhi's Work in Bihar

Extract from a Report from the Governor of Bihar to Wavell, 3 March 1947.
IOR, R/3/1/148, Acc. No. 3463, NAI.

...9. News has just been received that Gandhi is on his way to Bihar. According to Mazumdar, my Chief Secretary, he has been prevailed on to do this by my Development Minister, Syed Mahmud, and the rest of the Ministry are by no means pleased about it. It is difficult to foresee exactly what line Gandhi will take. It is probable that he will insist on the Ministers taking more vigorous steps than they intended to implement their undertaking to appoint a Bihar Riots Inquiry Committee. I also think it likely that he will back with his personal influence and example the line that Khan Abdul Ghaffar has been taking since his return to Bihar. That is to call on the Hindus and Congressmen to repair with their own hands the Muslim houses that were damaged in the riots. This sounds very well, and accounts of Khan Abdul Ghaffar working hard himself all day as a coolie and living on the simplest fare makes good propaganda. These occasional incursions into the simple life are all very well when one has a return ticket, and when the Frontier Gandhi goes back to his own place his band of helpers will melt away. Unfortunately he has expressed himself against allowing the work of restoration to be carried out through contractors, which is the only way it can be done in quick time, and is a method to which the Ministers have now given a reluctant assent. The inevitable result of these appeals to Hindu benevolence, which I fear the Mahatma will support, will be that the work of rehabilitation will be greatly retarded, and there is no doubt that the Muslim League will put this down to deliberate policy on the part of the Congress, which is probably not true.

21. Gandhi Promises Effective Protection to Muslims

Interview between M.K. Gandhi and Rajendra Prasad, 5 March 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, p. 40.

PATNA

Gandhiji told him that he was not yet ready with his plan. On one or two points, however, he had come to a definite decision. He would allow Muslim concentration under certain conditions but he would neither give arms nor Muslim military and police. Instead, he would give them effective protection. Dr Rajendra Prasad agreed....

22. 'Advantage Lies in Admission': Gandhi Tours Bihar

M.K. Gandhi's Interview to C.P.N. Sinha, 5 March 1947
 Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi — The Last Phase*, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 257.

SINHA: Well, now that you have come, our burden is lightened.

GANDHIJI: I have come to lighten it. I have also wired Badshah Khan to come.

S. What did Badshah Khan think of the work that is being done here?

G. He said that the Ministry were agreeable to everything he told them but the officers would not be able to cope with the problem. People alone can do it. He further suggested that there should be a committee for the purpose but it should be purely non-political. I also feel the same way.

S. There are many Hindus who did good work during the disturbances. Where there were such workers, very little damage was done. The Muslims still have faith in them.

G. All this should never have taken place.

S. People forgot themselves for a while. Where some care was taken, nothing happened. Congress workers did not check the disturbances at all places as they ought to have done.

G. That is the truth. Advantage lies in admission. Then alone can the remedy be applied.

S. At places Hindus did their best to protect the Muslims. But the problem calls for whole-hearted active co-operation of all sections. They are ready to give it.

23. 'Bihar Massacre Like Jallianwala Massacre': Gandhi's Appeal for Commission of Inquiry

M.K. Gandhi's Discussion with Rajendra Prasad and Bihar Ministers, 5 March 1947
 Valmiki Chaudhary (Ed.), *Dr Rajendra Prasad; Correspondence and Select Documents*, Vol. VII, pp. 251-2.

We should make a public confession of our mistake. No commission of inquiry has been appointed to date. If we are not quick about the matter, it will lose its effect. If we do not appoint a commission, we shall be held to have admitted the League's case.

The Chief Minister, Sri Krishna Sinha, expressed the fear that the League would make political capital out of it. Gandhiji admitted that that was not improbable. But justice never paused to consider if it would be exploited.

GANDHIJI: My sixty years' experience has taught me nothing if not that. That is also the lesson of my three months of travail in Noakhali. I was groping in the dark but I said just what seemed to me to be the truth. Those who regarded me as their enemy could exploit it. But I had faith that sooner rather than later they would see their mistake. Be that as it may, my only strength lies in my ahimsa. The same applies to you also. If you grasp that, you will get over your fear and, undaunted by extraneous considerations, do justice.

Again and again Gandhiji tried to clear his old friend of unmerited suspicion. Dr Mahmud's letter, which had brought him to Bihar, was in reply to his (Gandhiji's) peremptory inquiries; the Doctor had not acted disloyally towards his colleagues. Dr Rajendra Prasad explained that there was really no difference. The Bihar Ministers were never opposed to Gandhiji's coming earlier. But they had judged that the situation might call for the employment of drastic measures; how could they call Gandhiji in that context? The Chief Minister put in that they had never tried to 'minimize' the atrocities.

GANDHIJI: From what I have been hearing, it seems to me that the Bihar massacre was like the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Dr Mahmud's wife today brought some Muslim women to me. I had no reply to their tears.

24. Searching Inwards: Inquiry Commission for Bihar Riots

M.K. Gandhi's Discussion with PCC Members at Patna, 9 March 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 59–60.

Gandhiji told them that the more he heard of the Government spokesman's apologia, the more he felt the need for turning the searchlight inward. He wondered if behind his earlier determination to stay on in Noakhali was not 'sheer obstinacy' on his part.

ONE MEMBER: Tell us how we can wash off our sin. What are your orders?

Gandhiji replied that he was ever averse to issuing orders. In Noakhali he could not. In Bihar he could but did not want to. The very nature of the work precluded it. What he wanted was to awaken their conscience and win their reasoned co-operation. Since the advent of power, Congressmen had forgotten the path of duty. In a way Muslims had come to believe Jinnah's charge that the Congress did not belong to all, that the Muslims that were with the Congress were there as mere puppets of the Congress with an axe to grind to the detriment and ruin of Islam. If the Hindus were sincere and brave, even the few Muslims that were with them could give the lie to that calumny and enable the Muslim masses to see that they were being misled, and perhaps save them from being misled.

He had served Bihar before. He had now come to them on what might be his last pilgrimage. If he died striving there, he would have done his duty. All things hung on truth, courage and knowledge. If none of these virtues was there, the future was dark indeed for Bihar and for India.

A Congressman got up to say that some Congressmen had taken part in the riot. He was interrupted by another Congressman who emphatically declared 'that no Congressman had taken any part in the riot'. Gandhiji felt hurt. The gentleman, he cut in, did not seem to know what he was talking about. Even their own colleagues had admitted that some Congressmen had taken part [in the riot]. If their confession was half-hearted they would not gain anything by it. He had said enough. They were all responsible people. They should search their hearts.

The Chief Minister explained the genesis of the trouble and how his Government had tried to do all they could before, during and after the outbreak. They were caught unprepared. The Governor was absent. The Chief Secretary and the Inspector-General of Police, both Englishmen, had let them down. British officers were having their revenge for 1942. He was sure, the 'inquiry would fully vindicate the Bihar Government'. Of course, they could not act with the strength of Pandit Nehru, who gave a thorough shaking to the officers. If it could be proved that the Government had intentionally allowed a single Muslim to be killed, said Chief Minister, they would have no right to remain in office.

Then, put in Gandhiji, it had to be admitted that there had been lack of foresight. They should not bring in the Governor or the English officers. The popular Ministers had to act as if the Governors did not exist. Granting that they (the Ministers) had not been guilty of any willful neglect of duty, still something was owing for what had actually happened. That needed intelligence, courage and purity of heart. Never had he been confronted with such a stupendous task in his life. Everything turned on what he could do with Bihar and the Biharis. If he succeeded in Bihar, India would be saved, the situation in the Punjab would be controlled, and the Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan would come into their own.

25. 'Do or Die': Gandhi Stays On in Bihar

A Letter by M.K. Gandhi, 11 March 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, p. 68.

PATNA

I have your letter. Now you and Shantilal have to worry about Panchgani. I don't think I can leave this place in the near future. I must do or die. God alone knows the final result. I understand about Bhangis. As regards village industries consult Kumarappa.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 33

26. Gandhi Asks Leaguers to 'Convince the People': 'Hindus Should Not Worry At All'

M.K. Gandhi's Talk with Muslim League Members, 11 March 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, p. 69.

PATNA

In your own interest please do not exaggerate. I admit that whatever has happened here is really deplorable. But in Noakhali also [the Hindus] are full of fear. Volunteers amongst you should go there and convince the people that we haven't yet attained independence and ask them why they are fighting with each other. You should go and declare that even a little Hindu girl or boy is just like your daughter or son and that they [Hindus] should not worry at all. If you go and do this much, peace will automatically return to the Punjab and Bihar. At the same time your name will shine forth in the world. Everyone is liable to make mistakes; but if they are rectified in time with a sincere heart, they will be forgotten.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 35

27. Non-violent Resistance to Provocations

M.K. Gandhi's Speech at Prayer Meeting in Patna, 11 March 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 69–72.

PATNA

Gandhiji began his address by saying that that was perhaps his last evening prayer for the time being in the city of Patna, because his tour was going to begin on the following day. For the next few days, he would tour with the city as the centre and return to it every night for rest, the prayers being naturally held elsewhere. He expected, however, that the spirit in which the previous evening's contributions to the fund for the Muslim sufferers had been made would continue unabated. The collections had amounted to nearly Rs 2,000, besides some ornaments, which yet remained to be auctioned. He was glad that women had given their ornaments, and he reminded them in this connection that the true ornament of woman was a pure heart, the place of which could never be taken by any physical adornment.

A friend said to me today that what the Hindus had done was no doubt very wrong, but that they had acted under great provocation. How could they remain peaceful after such incitement and provocation? Well, we should not try to minimize our guilt. The above argument would mean that if someone abuses or beats you, you will also return the abuse and hit back. Is it good to do the very thing, which angers you? You in your turn will provoke further anger. The world has reached the stage of atomic warfare in returning violence for violence. Let us pray to God that He may save us from this atom bomb mentality. I have been persuading everyone to observe silence in reply to abuse or violence.

The whole world tries to suppress the coward. Even God does not help the coward. He says, 'A person who is afraid of anyone except me, lacks faith in me.' The brave man who has learnt the lesson of non-violence does not return abuse for abuse, nor does he slaughter innocent children and women under any provocation.

If I am starving and you feed me, the contentment in my eyes will brighten your face too. But take another instance. Suppose I am starving and demand food from you by abusing you. You will drive me away, saying: 'Go and starve yourself to death.' My abuses will not get me food. They will, however, make me feel that I am a brave man. Again, if you ask your gatekeeper to beat me up for my abuses that will sow the seeds of hatred against you in my heart. I will say, 'You may deny me food if I abuse you; but why did you beat me?' The next day I shall gather a few friends and retaliate. Or, if you manage to kill me, it will create among my relations and friends a feeling of revenge against you. This will aggravate the quarrel. I look upon all this as cowardice. Even if the Muslims had incited the Hindus, they should have remained peaceful.

An evil returned by another evil only succeeded in multiplying it, instead of reducing it. It was a universal law, he said, that violence could never be quenched by superior violence but only by non-violence or non-violent resistance. But the true meaning of non-violent resistance had often been misunderstood or even distorted. It never implied that a non-violent man should bend before the violence of an aggressor. While not returning the latter's violence by violence, he should refuse to submit to the latter's illegitimate demand even to the point of death. That was the true meaning of non-violent resistance.

I shall now discuss Pakistan. Jinnah Saheb is my friend. I have gone to his house many a time. If Jinnah Saheb says to me: 'Concede Pakistan or I will kill you,' I will reply: 'You may

kill me if you like; but if you want Pakistan, you should first explain it to me. If you convince me that Pakistan is a worthy ideal and Hindus are maligning it for no reason, I shall proclaim to the Hindus from the house-tops that you should get Pakistan.'

But if the demand was backed by force, then the only course open to the non-violent man was to offer non-violent resistance against it as long as he was not convinced of its justice. One was not to return violence by violence but neutralize it by withholding one's hand and, at the same time, refusing to submit to the demand. This was the only civilized way of getting on in the world. Any other course could only lead to a race for armaments interspersed by periods of peace brought about by exhaustion, when preparations would be going on for violence of a superior order. Peace through superior violence inevitably led to the atom bomb and all that it stood for. It was the complete negation of non-violence and of democracy, which was not possible without the former.

The non-violent resistance described above required courage of a superior order to that needed in violent warfare. Forgiveness was the quality of the brave, not of the cowardly. Gandhiji here related a story from the *Mahabharata*: one of the Pandava brothers was accidentally injured while living in disguise in the home of King Virata. The brothers not only hid what had happened, but for fear that harm might come to the host if a drop of blood touched the ground, they prevented it from doing so by means of a golden bowl. It was this type of forbearance and courage, which Gandhiji wished every Indian to develop, whether he was a Hindu, Mussalman, Christian, Parsi or Sikh. That alone could rescue them from their present fallen condition.

A friend has written to me eulogizing the sword. The Muslims came here, says he, hurling abuses and unfurling Muslim League flags. We tried to dissuade them, continues the friend, but they did not listen. When, however, we pulled out the swords, asserts the friend, they came to their senses and became our friends. I tell you this was no true bravery. The persuasion was backed by the threat of the sword. Threats do not produce true friendship. If you were honest, you should have told the Muslims: 'Look here, you are only a handful and we are vast majority. You are abusing us. You want to unfurl your flag. And yet we shall not say anything to you nor return your abuse. But we shall not allow you to unfurl the flag nor shall we salute: the Pakistani flag.' If the Muslims had seen that, in spite of your vast majority, you do not wish to fight them, but that on the other hand you wish to be friendly with them, their conscience would have awakened and they would have become your true friends. The weapon of non-violence is mightier than the weapon of violence. The last Great War also proves this truth.

The lesson of non-violence was present in every religion but Gandhiji believe that perhaps it was here in India that its practice had been reduced to a science.

Hindu religion prescribes great *tapashcharya* for the realization of ahimsa. It is said that innumerable Hindus had shed their blood in the cause of ahimsa until the Himalayas became purified in their snowy whiteness by means of that sacrifice. The Hindus of today pay only lip service to ahimsa. You must demonstrate true ahimsa in this land of Ramachandra and King Janaka. True bravery consists in true ahimsa. At the moment you are guilty of committing very cowardly acts.



28. 'Women as the Very Embodiment of Non-violence'

M.K. Gandhi's Meeting with Muslim Women, 16 March 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 97–8.

PATNA

You should have faith in God. He is the one who looks after everyone. I am only striving [to do my duty]. You mix with the Hindu women. Tell the children in your families things, which promote love [among the two communities]. What you can do, men can never do. Tell your husband, son or father, or whoever is there, that he should rush to the rescue of the Hindus if they are terrorized by the Muslims anywhere in the country. Protect the Hindu women and inspire confidence in them that they are your own sisters. I have described women as the very embodiment of non-violence. God has given to woman a loving heart which man does not possess. You should put it to good use. It is as clear to me as daylight that as long as women do not acquire qualities of refinement and do not realize their duty, the country can make no progress. Women from numerous such Muslim families have come to me. So many of them are just like daughters to me. One of them is right in Noakhali. Amtussalaam is just skin and bones, but she is putting up a brave fight. She undertook a number of fasts. Raihana who comes from the family of Abbas Tyabji is just as brave. She is a devotee of Krishna. She reads the *Gita* and the Koran together. She understands the meaning of the *Gita* as much as she understands the meaning of the Koran. I believe that she has more Hindus than Muslims among her friends. There are many girls who have given up distinctions of caste and creed. My advice to you is that you should forget distinctions of caste and community if you want to be happy. It is one God who has endowed us with human life. We are all human beings, all men and women belonging to the same country. Let us justify our religion as human beings.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 64

29. Gandhi Disturbed by Violence in Bihar

M.K. Gandhi's Speech at a Prayer Meeting in Bir, 18 March 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 114–16.

I saw today the wreckage caused by us at Masaurhi. I had read in newspapers the Muslim League version of the happenings at Masaurhi, and I confess I thought the version was grossly exaggerated. I did not believe that man could be so depraved or that Biharis could stoop so low. But today I witnessed it with my own eyes. When Muslims fled you either looted their property or destroyed it. They had not harmed you in any way. I have come here with the resolve of serving the Muslims. I am a servant of God and therefore consider it my duty to serve all human beings.

It is very unfortunate that our hearts have not yet been cleansed. I concede that the Muslims behaved very viciously in Calcutta and Noakhali. But how can that be avenged in Bihar? It was very wrong decision to observe a Noakhali Day here. Had I known it, I would never have allowed such an observance in Bihar. I am very sorry that my name was falsely dragged into this affair and I was maligned.

My statements were presented to the public in a twisted and distorted form. When Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru constituted the Provisional Government at Delhi, people wished to celebrate

the occasion like Diwali. When I heard this, I said we would do no such thing because Jawaharlal and his colleagues had put on a crown of thorns. The Muslim League had not joined the Government and it was a pity that riots had broken out in Noakhali. But my statement was distorted and people were told that Gandhi wanted them to observe a Noakhali Day. I had never dreamt of this. And when the Noakhali Day was observed, people were so much excited that they thought they were expected to settle the Noakhali scores with the Muslims.

Hindus and Muslims used to live here as good neighbours. They had mutual love and affection. They might have quarreled occasionally, but that did not affect their relations. They used to become friends again soon. It is an altogether different story now. Today celebration of any Day leads to fratricide. I have said that this must not happen while I am alive. I can never be a witness to fratricide. If this thing is repeated in Bihar I shall perish in that conflagration. I have heard that the Muslims here are panic-stricken over the Punjab Day to be observed on the 23rd. I hope this is a false alarm. I assert that we must not observe a Punjab Day. If we do this, it will lead to dreadful consequences. The freedom of our country will become a distance dream. I pray to God that He must never let me live to witness that day. I am awakening the whole of Bihar through these words addressed to you.

While I was coming to the village of Bihar, the residents of two villages stopped me on the way and handed over to me two letters. The first letter was addressed jointly by the Hindus and Muslims of Sain. They also contributed Rs 55 for the relief of distressed Muslims in Bihar. I wish to read out to you their letter. They write:

We the residents of Sain are pained to see you in anguish which has been caused by our foolishness. We are extremely sorry for what has happened. Here, however, we Hindus and Muslims lived like brothers despite the prevailing lawlessness and we are happy and proud to tell you that we are living as brothers even today. We seek your blessings that we may continue to live in love and affection.

The other letter was given to me by the residents of Barni. They write:

When the riots were going on all around we formed a peace committee. No one was harmed here and no disturbance was caused in our area. There is absolutely no difference between Hindus and Muslims. We are working on the same lines even today, and we assure you that we will always continue to live like brothers.

The residents of this village also were not involved in any riot; and yet they are feeling sorry. This has made me very happy.

Some of our Muslim brothers have said that they are afraid of returning to their homes. Thieves and dacoits have carried away their goods. According to me, even the thieves and dacoits are our brothers. It would be ideal if they gave up their profession. But if that is not possible, they should at any rate not rob the innocent people whom we have beaten away from their homes.

Now you should contribute as much as you can for the relief of the Muslims in distress. I cannot collect the donations myself, because that exhausts me, besides I shall have to work during the night also. Volunteers are going round for collection. Please donate the maximum amount you can and thereby earn the merit for it and at the same time atone for your sins.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar-II, pp. 10-12



30. Gandhiji's Call to 'Do or Die'

M.K. Gandhi's Discussion with Congress Workers at Bir, 19 March 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 118–21.

BIR

Shah Uzair Munimi, President of the District Congress Committee, described the devastation in Patna district. According to him the district of Patna was the worst-hit in Bihar. After listening to his report, Gandhiji said:

What should we do now? Have you thought of something? Shah Saheb replied that if they could get even a few honest men, thing could be set right. Thereupon Gandhiji asked:

Is it or isn't it a fact that quite a large number of Congressmen took part in the disturbances? I ask this question because people are making this allegation. But the Congressmen assembled here can themselves tell the truth. How many of the 132 members your Committee were involved? It would be a very great thing if all of you assert that none of you was involved. But this assertion cannot be made. These 132 are supposed to be the elected representatives of the people. But, I learn there is a lot of fraud involved in this. There are many in the Congress who register bogus members by paying four-annas from their own pockets and thus become elected representatives. I have also worked in the Congress. Today I am not even a four-anna member. But there was a time when I was a member of the Working Committee and I was virtually all in all. Hence I know the Congress inside out. This Police Station has jurisdiction over 300 villages which have elected 132 representatives. They can do substantial work if they so choose.

I wish to ask you, how could you live to see an old woman of 110 years being butchered before your eyes? How could you tolerate it? I do not wish to talk about anything else. I have vowed to do or die. I will not rest nor let others rest. I would wander all over on foot and ask the skeletons lying about, how all that had happened. There is such a fire raging in me that I would know no peace till I have found a solution for all this. You know what happened when I reached Sodepur. I had not gone there for rest. Hence I left for Kazirkhil and Chaumuhani is a big Station. What was the use of waiting there? Kazirkhil had been devastated. But the station-master there had transformed it into some sort of an ashram. So I requested him to take me to some place where there were no amenities. Hence I proceeded to Srirampur. It was a predominantly Muslim area with only a sprinkling of Hindu houses which had been burnt down. The Muslims welcomed me. Even then I hurried from there and wandered from village to village. I am afraid I will have to go through the same ordeal in Bihar. If I find that my comrades are deceiving me, I will be furious and I shall walk barefoot on and on through hail or storm. I would throw away the soft seat and other amenities which you have offered me. After all, it was in Bihar that I had renounced similar comforts earlier. When I came to Champaran in 1917, though Rajendra Babu and other leaders were my friends, they used to have their meals in separate kitchens. I asked them why we should eat separately when we were all engaged in rendering service. Then I set up a common kitchen. My wife Kasturba, Mahadev Desai's wife Durgabehn and Narahari Bhai's Manibehn all of them together used to cook and all of us had our meals together. I would never get more loyal and hearty co-operation in the whole world than what I got from Rajendra Babu, Brijkishore Babu, Janak Babu, Dharani Babu and Gorakh Babu. As a result of this there was a transformation in Champaran. The British indigo planters lost their hold. But I am told the Indian planters today have become even more

powerful. The lesson we learnt in Champaran was the result of the hardships undergone by the people of Bihar. Without them I could not be what I am nor could my achievements be worth much. I am bird of passage. God has not allowed me to stay at one place. We have to work in the same spirit today with which Brijkishore Babu had worked. Today I do not find that honesty or loyalty. I once again appeal to you to work only if you can do so truthfully. My words may sound harsh, but you must realize that even if you forsake me, I shall not leave Bihar. It is difficult to force me out of Bihar. During the Champaran satyagraha, the Commissioner of Tirhut notified me that I, being an outsider, should leave the area. I told Brijkishore Babu and Rajendra Babu that I wished to challenge the Government and that they would have to give up their legal profession and become my clerks or interpreters if they decided to back me up. I gave them a night's time to think it over. Rajendra Babu had been offered a judicial post. But the next morning itself he and Brijkishore Babu announced that they had decided to give up their legal practice and to become my clerks and interpreters. The Bihar of today is the result of the transformation of their hearts. It is now for you to decide whether I should go in the car or travel on foot. Of course I prefer walking. When Muslims in Noakhali taunted me to go to Bihar, I used to feel hurt. Some Muslims look upon me as an enemy of Islam. Some people expressed doubts whether I could achieve what I wanted to in Noakhali. But I had no doubts. Even today I believe that I can work for Noakhali and the whole of India from Bihar. The non-violent fight which I had launched against, injustice and oppression in Champaran had sent new life pulsating throughout India. The work in Bihar this time is far more difficult and significant. This time it seems I will have to strive to the utmost to prove that Hinduism and Islam can exist side by side. This is being put to test today. Many people believe that they cannot and one will have to remain subordinate to the other. I do not think so. If the Hindu Mahasabha insists that Muslims should remain subordinate to Hindus or if the Muslim League insists that Hindus should subordinate themselves to Muslims, this will not do. No one need live as subordinate to another. All have to live together as equals. Even Jinnah Saheb has now declared that the minorities will be shown greater consideration in regions where Muslims constitute the majority.

Q. All people lived like brothers in Bihar before the trouble started in Bengal. Later on Noakhali turned everyone's head. The events in the Punjab are also casting their shadows. It is necessary that we go and live among the people to prevent the outside evil influence from spreading and to maintain cordial relations. But today many Congressmen do not wish to serve the people; they want power for themselves. They join the Congress for their own selfish ends and indulge in intrigue and groupism. How shall we get out of this mire? If we strengthen the Congress in Bihar we can check the evil. The people of Bihar have behaved badly, we have become vicious, the whole atmosphere has been vitiated. In this atmosphere, many Congressmen kept quiet and could not stem the tide, and some of them were carried away by it.

A. It was easy to wrest power from British hands but it is very difficult to overcome our own weakness and to set up an efficient administration. You should tell me whether you can co-operate with me in this work or not. If you cannot, I request you to leave me. There are people today who declare that I am out of date and that I should give up all politics. I do not agree with this. This region is teeming with Hindus. We will not rely upon the police for our work although they are our police. We must do this work ourselves. Suhrawardy Saheb had deployed the police in Noakhali to protect me from Muslim fanatics; but I made friends with

Muslims there. The Government here have also deployed the police. I ask them, what is the police for? Muslims are not going to kill me here; the Hindus may probably think of doing so. That is why I wish that the task of establishing peace should be undertaken by you all and not only by the Government although it is our Government. You should either achieve success in your mission or die in the attempt.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar-II, pp. 13–16

31. Gandhi Appeals to Hindus to ‘Undo’ the Damage

M.K. Gandhi’s Speech at a Prayer Meeting at Masaurhi, 20 March 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 125–7.

You know I have returned after a two days’ stay at Bir. I could see within these two days the damage wrought by us. Today also I saw a village which had been deserted, and where a large number of women and children had been killed. I cannot narrate the whole story, because my heart is so full that I might burst into tears if I tried to tell it. One who wants to see things for himself can still go there. We have not been able to do anything by way of reparations during all these months. The devastated villages continue to wear a deserted look. Even now thieves and dacoits haunt the place and carry away goods since no Muslim stays there. And how can the Muslims stay at a place where their brothers and sisters, parents and children have been slaughtered? The mere memory of the massacre will stun them. I myself, perhaps, could not have stayed there. You might argue that the Government should rebuild or repair the damaged houses. But I ask you, ‘Did you seek permission from the Government, when you resorted to murder, loot and arson?’ You have to atone for the sins, not the Government, because, after all the Government is your own and not imported from England.

If you rebuild Muslim houses and clean up their villages, they may think of returning to their homes in the confidence that Hindus had become their brothers, forgetting and forgiving the death of their relatives, who after all, had to die one day or other. But this can happen only if you rebuild their houses with your own hands, clean their wells, sink new wells to re-place the old ones filled with corpses of massacred Muslims. Muslims will trust you only when you do all this; and then they will return to their villages on their own. I appeal to every Hindu brother and sister to participate personally in undoing the damage. Those who are convinced that this is their duty should enter their names in the list with me or with Mridulabehn. Those who cannot come to me here or at Patna, should send their names by post. Much work remains to be done at Masaurhi too. You should render service wherever necessary, preferably in your own neighbourhood. There is no need for outsiders to come over to Masaurhi for their work of resettlement. Put up beautiful houses in place of the debris so that one who looks at them will hardly believe what ruins were there. When you do this it is bound to influence the other provinces too and its fragrance will spread all over India.

I would request you not to think of celebrating a Punjab Day. Never make the mistake of avenging the Punjab in Bihar. Just as the Muslims here are in panic, so are the Hindus trembling in fear in Noakhali at the talk of a Pakistan Day. I wish to reach the ears of Janab Suhrawardy Saheb, the Chief Minister of Bengal. I wish to remind him that he had called upon me, as a Hindu, to go to Bihar where Hindus had perpetrated many atrocities, and that I came to Bihar

at his bidding. The Hindus here have indeed committed many sins which need to be atoned for. I am myself undergoing penance. That is why I am here in Bihar although I have many tasks awaiting me at Sevagram and in Delhi. If Suhrawardy Saheb wishes that I should remain in Bihar, he should prevent the observance of a Pakistan Day in Bengal. I do not want to prevent the Muslims from demanding Pakistan; but they should do so by explaining the advantages of Pakistan. Even if they want to observe a Pakistan Day, they should do so by convincing the Hindus so that they don't get nervous.

Hindus have been writing to me and confessing their guilt. I am also receiving letters written by Hindus and Muslims that because of the fraternal feeling there had been perfect peace in the village and that they will never turn into each other's enemies. Such sentiments make me happy. I am also happy that people are contributing generously for the relief of afflicted Muslims. But now I would appeal to you to donate not merely money but also your own hard labour; take up the trowel and get down to reconstructing the homes of Muslims which you have destroyed.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar-II, pp. 19–20

C. BOMBAY

1. Report from Bombay Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bombay for the First Half of January 1947,
17 January 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/1/47, NAI.

...3. COMMUNAL—The communal situation in Bombay city continued to be disturbed during the fortnight and stray cases of stabbing occurred daily. There were also cases of arson, looting, acid-throwing and stone-throwing and some crude bomb incidents. The situation deteriorated on 9th January as a result of the murder of Mr D.N. Lad, a caste Hindu physical instructor, by a Muslim and a Hindu. Although the Hindu assailant claimed to be a Maratha, rumours were afloat that he was a Harijan and this resulted in the murder by caste Hindus of Mr B.J. Deorukhkar, a well-known Harijan leader, a member of Dr Ambedkar's Party and a Municipal Corporator. On this day alone there were 43 stabbing cases, the highest number for a day during the fortnight. The workers in 43 textile mills struck work on the day on account of the murder of Mr Lad. The funeral procession of Mr Lad was attended by about 30,000 persons. The crowd swelled later to about 50,000 persons, most of whom were in an aggressive mood and attacked lorries and cars and stoned the surrounding buildings indiscriminately. One of the processionists also stabbed a Muslim in a passing lorry and as its driver accelerated his speed to get away from the crowd, he knocked down some processionists, three of whom succumbed to their injuries. This incident infuriated the mob who got out of control and indulged in rioting and arson on a large scale. The police resorted to firing on several occasions during the fortnight to disperse violent crowds and as a result 21 persons were injured. The total number of casualties from 1st September to 15th January is 769 dead and 2,612 injured. During this period 13,936 persons were rounded up and 4,731 persons were arrested for breach of prohibitory orders.

The only incidents which occurred in the rest of the Province during the fortnight are the burning of two paddy stacks in a village in the Kolaba District and the disturbances on 8th and 12th January in Nandurbar in the West Khandesh district. The disturbances arose over the premature termination of a wrestling bout on 8th January between a Muslim and a Hindu. Thereupon the spectators, who were mostly Hindus, created confusion and panic and as they dispersed they became rowdy and threw stones in a Muslim locality and damaged Muslim property. The police, however, rushed to the spot and restored order. The town continued quiet till the evening of 12th January, when suddenly there was a clash between two rival crowds. The police dispersed the crowds by opening fire. Shortly afterwards four persons were stabbed, one of whom died, and another was assaulted with sticks. No casualties were caused by police firing. The situation is now quiet....

2. Report from Bombay Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bombay for the Second Half of January 1947,
3 February 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/1/47, NAI.

...3. COMMUNAL: During the first half of the fortnight the communal situation in Bombay City began to improve, though stray stabbing incidents occurred daily. The situation again deteriorated on 23rd January, when...considerable hooliganism occurred in connection with the birthday celebrations of Mr Subhas Chandra Bose. The incidents assumed a communal aspect and several cases of stabbing, assault, stone-throwing, acid-throwing, and other things were reported from different parts of the city. In the wake of these disorders the news of the imposition of ban by the Punjab Government on the Muslim National Guards and the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh reached the City. As a result communal tension increased and stabbings and other incidents occurred daily. The police resorted to firing on several occasions to disperse violent crowds and as a result six persons were killed and 63 persons were injured. Tear gas was also used to disperse crowds defying curfew orders. The total number of casualties from 1st September to 31st January is 811 dead and 2,867 injured. During this period 14,814 persons were rounded up and 5,302 were arrested for breach of prohibitory orders.

Collective fines amounting to Rs 18,400 were imposed on the residents of eight localities in the City.

The Gujarat and Karnatak districts continued quiet.

In Maharashtra, some incidents, mostly minor, occurred in the districts of Kolaba, East and West Khandesh and Poona. In Kolaba 13 houses and five cattle sheds were burnt and a Hindu MLA was stabbed by a Hindu. It is suspected that the latter was hired by a Muslim for the purpose. There were also two bomb explosions, one in a mosque and the other in a Hindu house. In East Khandesh, a clash between Hindus and Muslims occurred at Yawal over the question of playing music before a mosque. In West Khandesh, the situation at Nandurbar continued tense and a Hindu was assaulted and a Muslim boy was stabbed. In Poona, an attempt was made to set fire to the door of a mosque and two tombs were damaged....



D. DELHI

1. Censorship of Newspapers and Other Organizations

Note by SP, CID, Delhi, 10 February 1947

File No. 29/47-C, 1947, Confidential Branch, Chief Commissioner's Office, Delhi, Delhi State Archives

Delhi CID,
No. D-1448
10.2.1947

A list is attached of the persons and organizations whose correspondence requires attention by our censorship staffs. It will be seen that censorship is only contemplated in the case of the Communist Party of India, the Congress Socialist Party, the Forward Bloc, the Revolutionary Socialist Party of India, Students and all communal volunteer organizations. The only exception to this is the censorship of newspapers. The reasons for including newspapers in our censorship list are as follows:

- (a) a good deal of general information on the political situation, particularly with relation to the left wing parties, is obtained from sources in touch with newspapers;
- (b) a large number of Government servants are in the habit of writing to newspapers of all political views either disclosing secret departmental information or revealing the fact that they are members of, or sympathizers with political or communal organizations contrary to departmental rules.

It is to be emphasized that the censorship of newspapers does not necessarily imply the collection of intelligence regarding the political parties which they represent as strict instructions have already been issued to all censorship staffs not to touch the correspondence of persons belonging to the political parties now in power at the Centre. The censorship contemplated is to collect intelligence which is in the interests of the Government of India and the local administration only. Moreover, left wing subversive organizations have their contacts in all newspapers and it is necessary to keep a watch on these. It is in the knowledge of the Intelligence Bureau that a considerable amount of information of value from this aspect has been derived from censorship of these newspapers already and it will leave a definite gap in our intelligence system if it is dropped.

The suggestion has been made that a somewhat irresponsible attitude is being adopted towards censorship in Delhi. It may be pointed out that all interceptions are dealt with by me personally and that the strictest supervision is exercised over the activities of censorship staffs. If the Home Department of the Government of India are to scrutinise our censorship lists it ought to be pointed out to them that most of the valuable information obtained by intercepting correspondence comes to light through the somewhat irregular process known as 'fishing'. It is only in this way that accommodation addresses of Communists and others, the whereabouts of absconders and, in fact all information other than the routine communications sent between branches of political organizations, can be ascertained. It is presumed, therefore that, in general, there will be no objection to a continuation of this system. On the other hand, if the Government of India record their objection to a regular order for the interception of the correspondence of any particular person or organization they cannot expect the Delhi CID

to undertake the responsibility of producing any information, however important, relating to such person or organization in an irregular manner.

F.H.G. Bridgman
Superintendent of Police, CID, GH

Newspapers

- (71) The Hindustan Times, New Delhi
- (72) The Dawn, Faiz Bazaar Road, Delhi
- (73) The National Call, Mori Gate, Delhi
- (74) The Janata Weekly, Connaught Place, New Delhi
- (75) The Daily Tej, Naya Bazaar, Delhi
- (76) The Riyasat, Charkhewalan, Chawri Bazaar, Delhi
- (77) The Ansari
- (78) The Anjam
- (79) The Payam
- (80) The Watan
- (81) The Swarajiya

* * *

Secret

D.O. No. 158-ST/CC

Delhi
19 February 1947

My dear Porter,

This is in reply to your secret D.O. letter No.1570/47-Poll (I) dated 14th/15th instant regarding the censorship.

2. I am sorry that I omitted to give details of the students and their organizations mentioned at Serials No. 28 to No. 38 of the list enclosed with my D.O. letter No. 120.-ST/CC dated the 11th instant. These details are as follows.

There are three student organizations in Delhi.

The Delhi Provincial Muslim Students Federation which, although supports the policy of the Muslim League, contains an extremist left wing element which I think it is desirable to watch.

The Delhi Provincial Students Congress is at present under the influence of the Congress Socialist Party, but members of other revolutionary organizations at a work in it, including the Forward Bloc and the Revolutionary Socialist Party of India.

3. It has in the past been found necessary to watch the correspondence of the student organizations of the type of those mentioned above from the law and order point of view as irresponsible youths very often do not follow the land or instructions of their more sober-minded elders. It is therefore in the interest of good and peaceful administration to be able to anticipate strikes, demonstrations, and other things, more particularly as these more often than not lend to breaches of the peace.

4. Items 28–30 of the list refer to the three organizations mentioned above, while items 31–38 refer to the more prominent members of these organizations.

Yours sincerely,
W. CHRISTIE

A.E. Porter, Esquire, CSI, CIE, ICS,
Secretary to the Govt of India,
Home Department

2. Politicization of Government Servants

Minutes of the Fortnightly Meeting of the Home Department and the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, 18 March 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 5/7/47, NAI.

79. Situation in Delhi.

The SSP mentioned that a number of Government clerks were participating in political demonstrations. On the 11th March ('Anti-Pakistan Day') large gatherings in which there were almost certainly government clerks held meetings in Karol Bagh and Lodi Colony, shouted slogans and blocked roads. Lists of persons participating were not at present available, but were under preparation. The SSP suggested that Section 151 of the CPC could perhaps be applied as the 23rd March is being kept up as 'Pakistan Day' and the Hindu Mahasabha are planning to hold 'Punjab Day' also on the 23rd. He mentioned that communal tension had risen in the city and that Hindu and Sikh refugees are arriving from the Punjab.

3. Report from Delhi

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Delhi for the First Half of March 1947,
19 March 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.

Political and Communal—On this occasion also I combine these two paragraphs as it is almost impossible to separate the political events from the communal. The serious and widespread disturbances in the Punjab, following the resignation of the Unionist Ministry, have gravely agitated people of all classes and communities, and communal feelings in Delhi, which had shown a welcome improvement in previous weeks, have again deteriorated seriously and tension is high. The scarcity of news contained in the official communiqués issued by the Punjab authorities has encouraged the spreading of wild rumours and the publication of what are probably garbled and exaggerated reports, but subsequent information has not always proved these reports to be wrong.

The enthusiasm displayed by the Muslim League over what they regarded as the successful outcome of their civil disobedience movement has given place to acute nervousness as a result of the subsequent events in the Punjab and the possible repercussions they might have here in Delhi. The leaders of the Muslim National Guards and Bazm-i-Pakistan are now concentrating chiefly on what they call defensive precautions for the protection of the Muslim community. Even nationalist Muslims have been outspoken against Master Tara Singh in particular for his

provocative speeches and the action which they allege was responsible for the outbreak of the rioting. Hindus and Sikhs on the other hand have severely condemned the police firing on Hindu and Sikh demonstrators in the early stages of the disturbances, and full support has been offered to the Hindus and Sikhs in their efforts to prevent the formation of a Muslim League Ministry there. The Sikhs more than the Hindus perhaps have been perturbed and have reacted even more violently to the news of the rioting in the Punjab, partly due to the lead given by Master Tara Singh and partly to the heavy casualties which Sikhs are said to have suffered. The result has been several inflammatory speeches at meetings at which His Excellency the Governor and Government officials of the Punjab have also been strongly criticized for their alleged alliance with the Muslim League. There has been talk of raising an Akali Regiment in Delhi and sending jathas to the Punjab but the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee is reluctant to take any definite action without instructions from Amritsar.

Anti-Pakistan [*sic*] Day was observed jointly by the Hindus and Sikhs in Delhi on the 11th March, and the occasion caused considerable anxiety to the authorities, but eventually it passed off without any serious major incidents, chiefly due to the fact that processions had been banned and other precautions taken. It is also true that the responsible leaders were not anxious to have a clash with the authorities, and the mischief-makers were really in a minority. Although considerable enthusiasm was displayed at the public meeting held on the afternoon of the 11th March, the attendance was actually below what had been expected. An Anti-Pakistan Council of Action has been formed in Delhi, the members of which are chiefly young and irresponsible elements of the Hindu and Sikh communities, including students. Throughout the day of the 11th the Hindu and Sikh shopkeepers in the city observed a hartal and Hindu and Sikh students remained absent from their classes. By midday most of the mills had closed down. The only important examples of lack of discipline of Government servants on that day was a strike of about 2,000 Hindu and Sikh workers in military depots in the Cantonments and by some residents of the Lodi Road Colony, who held an Anti-Pakistan meeting that evening.

The resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee recommending the partition of both Bengal and the Punjab as a solution of the communal problem of these Provinces has not been liked by the Muslims, who realize that its acceptance will merely reduce their Pakistan areas. On the other hand, the Hindus and Sikhs welcome the recommendation as it will give them two more Provinces in which they will hold a majority.

The RSS Sangh in Delhi held its annual rally on the 9th of March in which about one lakh of volunteers were present, of whom about half were from outside Delhi. Madho Rao Golvelkar, the leader of the Sangh, in his speeches both at the rally and at its subsequent private meetings was very cautious but gave strict instructions that all outsiders should leave Delhi without delay when the rally has finished. The recent announcement of the British Government to hand over power in India not later than June 1948 has led to an increase of activities by the Sangh with a view to strengthening it....

Yours sincerely,
W. CHRISTIE



E. NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE

1. 'Further Raids in Hazara Distt'

The Tribune, 5 January 1947.

RAWALPINDI, 4 Jan.—Alarming reports of further raids on a number of other villages in Hazara district—culminating in loot, murder and arson—are still pouring in every day.

Mallachh, a prominent village situated between Nathiagali and Doongagali in Hazara district, having about 400 non-Muslim houses was raided on the noon of 2 January by a mob about 100 strong, mostly composed of goondas of the area, according to report received here last night.

It is stated that the raiders after ransacking several houses, lifting cattle and removing grains, set fire to them—burning alive a number of inmates, including women, children and aged men.

One Arjan Singh, an only survivor of his family of about 12 persons, arrived here along with his brother Baldev Singh after traversing on foot a distance of about 60 miles mostly covered with snow. He told 'The Tribune' Representative that his wife, six children and children of his brother and uncles were done to death and their houses set fire to. He was himself saved because he was not present in the house and it was only on returning after the day's work that he witnessed the tragedy enacted.

Arjan Singh despatched telegrams to the Frontier Governor and the Premier from Sunnybank, near Murree, on Friday afternoon intimating them the tragic happenings, which he characterized as general massacre.

Reports received from other sources further indicate that a number of villages including Mauri Wadhbhen, Jaba and Pelian, have been looted and burnt. Several other villages are threatened with the same fate.

Vaidya Yogi Ramnath Shastri, President of the District Congress Committee, Rawalpindi, has dispatched lengthy telegrams to Pt Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Sardar Baldev Singh, Acharya Kripalani, Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan, the Frontier Governor, Dr Khan Sahib and Mr Mehr Chand Khana conveying the above happening and requesting them to adopt immediate measures to save further catastrophe.

2. Public Safety in NWFP

NWFP Public Safety Ordinance, 9 January 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 25/2/1947, NAI.

Government Gazette

North-West Frontier Province

Extraordinary

Published by Authority

Peshawar, Thursday, The 9th January 1947

Legislative

Notification

No. 74-L.D., dated Peshawar, the 8th January, 1947.

The North-West Frontier Province Public Safety Ordinance.

No. 1 of 1947.

An Ordinance to provide for special powers to prevent dissemination of false rumours and power to require security from the notables of a village to safeguard the property of evacuees.

Whereas the Governor of the North-West Frontier Province is satisfied that circumstances exist which render it necessary for him to take immediate action to provide for special measures to prevent dissemination of false rumours and power to require security from the notables of villages, and others, to safeguard the property of evacuees and to appoint chaukidars at the villagers' expense to look after such property until they return.

NOW, THEREFORE, in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 89 of the Government of India Act, 1935, the Governor is pleased to make and promulgate the following Ordinance:

Short title, commencement and duration:

1. (1) This Ordinance may be called the North-West Frontier Province Public Safety Ordinance, 1947.

(2) It shall come into force in the Hazara District at once. The Provincial Government may by notification in the official Gazette extend it to such other part or parts of the Province as it may deem fit.

(3) It shall continue in force for a period of six months....

Protection of property of evacuees—

4. The District Magistrate, if satisfied that circumstances exist due to which a class of people have left their place of residence for fear of their lives or property, or both may with the approval of the Provincial Government—

- (a) call upon such lambardars and notables of the place as may be selected by him to execute a bond jointly or severally, with or without sureties, for such period and for such amount as may be considered sufficient by him for the safe custody of moveable and immovable property left by the evacuee;
- (b) require the place, at its own expense, to furnish such number of chaukidars as he may consider necessary to look after the property of the evacuees until their return to the place....

O.K. Caroe
Governor
North-West Frontier Province

3. 'Public Safety Ordinance in Hazara District'

Extracts from a Report from *Dawn*, 11 January 47.

Peshawar, Thursday.—A Public Safety Ordinance has been enforced in Hazara District for six months by the NWFP Government. It can be extended throughout the Province if considered necessary, says a Press communiqué issued by the Director of Information, NWFP.

...A fresh incident is reported from Nagridhudlal, north-east of Havelian, where some houses were attacked. Details are lacking.

It is understood that the provincial Government has allowed the Deputy Commissioner of Hazara to make use, without reference to the Government, of the powers under Section 22, 36 and 40 of the Frontier Crime Regulations.

Collective Fines

These sections relate to collective fines, expulsion from the district and taking of securities for keeping the peace and good behaviour.

Mr Mehrchand Khanna, Finance Minister accompanied by Sardar Ishar Singh, Revenue Parliamentary Secretary, left today on a second tour of Hazara.

A Press Note issued by the director of Information, NWFP, says: The Deputy Commissioner and superintendent of police of Hazara with detachments of the Frontier Constabulary and police rounded-up the villages of Garhi Phulgaran and Rajoya about six miles from Havelian.

'At Phulgaran, 40 people were evacuated while a family of 14 refused to leave the village. Two people were arrested and 10 taken as hostages. It was found that no arson or loot had been committed at Phulgaran.

'At Rajoya 40 shops had been burnt. The villagers were fined Rs 5,000 under Section 22 of the Frontier Crime Regulations. Of this, Rs 200 was realized on the spot. One family was evacuated from the village.

'At Balakot, 40 miles north of Abbottabad, eight shops of both communities and a place of worship were burnt on 5 January.'—API.

4. Rioting in Peshawar and Hazara

Telegram from M.K. Gandhi to Jawaharlal Nehru, 15 January 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVI, p. 357.

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
 NEW DELHI

PATHETIC TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM PESHAWAR ABOUT MURDER ARSON AND LOOT. RECEIVED SIMILAR WIRE [FROM HAZARA]. PLEASE REPLY ABOUT TRUTH ALLEGATIONS.

BAPU

5. Disturbances in Hazara District in Response to 'Exaggerated' Propaganda about Bihar

Telegram from Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru to M.K. Gandhi, 16 January 1947
 AICC Papers, File No. G-14/1946-47, NMML.

EXPRESS

Owing to false and exaggerated propaganda about Bihar several serious incidents took place in Hazara district involving attacks on Hindus Sikhs arson and loot. Number of persons killed not considerable. Large numbers refugees. Frontier Government has taken strong action against miscreants also helping refugees. Situation now quiet. We are keeping in close touch and will take all necessary steps.

.....

Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi to Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel

Pathetic telegram received from Peshawar about murder arson and loot received similar wire. Please reply about truth allegations.

.....

6. Communal Trouble in Hazara District

Extracts from a Report by Jai Dev Kapur, 17 January 1947
AICC Papers, File No. G-14/1946-47, NMML.

Along with the other people throughout India, the tribal people in the Hazara district were feeling the inconvenience due to shortage of food and other commodities during the II World War. The Muslim League leaders took an undue advantage of this and carried on misleading propaganda amongst the tribal people. They held meetings at several places to poison the minds of the tribal people. Unluckily Congress lost all but one Muslim seat in Hazara district to the Muslim League in the election. When the Congress Ministry was formed in NWFP, the leaguers made their headquarters in Hazara and started a vigorous propaganda against the Congress in general and the Hindus in particular. When the Interim Government was formed by Pandit Nehru, the Leaguers raised the false cry that 'Hindu Raj was established in India' and poisoned the minds of the people further. The communal riots in Calcutta, Bombay, Noakhali and Bihar lent further breeze to the fire lit by the Muslim Leaguers especially when some Muslim from those places returned to the District carrying all kinds of panicky stories with them. The Leaguers sent their workers everywhere, and even students studying in mosques were employed for this nefarious work. The Provincial Government was in the know of this. It was expected that the tribal people would resort to dacoities at any time. Just two months before the first dacoity from the side of the tribal people, Khan Wali Mohd Khan, son of Badshah Khan, came to Batal on a hunting expedition and he, being fully informed of the situation, went back and requested Dr Khan Sahib to make proper arrangements in the Batal Area....

Communal troubles are continuing throughout the Hazara District and 31,000 Hindus and Sikhs are in a dangerous position. Some have been killed, some wounded, and some invariably reduced to the position of paupers. These people are today roaming about for want of shelter and several are even sick due to their being ill clothed in this winter season.

If proper action is not taken in time, similar troubles are expected in other parts of Northern India.

It is suggested that the Government should immediately take the following measures:

1. The Leaders who are responsible for this disturbance should be at once arrested and should be given severe punishments.
2. The Sirdars of Karlal Nation, who disturbed the area between Murree Hills and Havelian should be at once taken into custody.
3. Strong measures should be taken under Public Safety Act, curfew order and Section 144 and these should be firmly enforced.
4. The Government officials who have taken part should be suspended and tried by the proper court.
5. The Hindus and Sikhs who have evacuated the District to the Punjab and Kashmir should be brought back with assurances for their safety. Public men should be requested to help in this. A greater number of Hindus and Sikhs should be sent to live in places like Kot Najibullah, Haripur, Sarai Salah, Havelian, Abbotabad, Nawan Shar, Dhamtaur, Mansehra, Baffa, Shinkairi and Garhi Bahibullah and must be properly provided with military forces till peace is restored.
6. The Government should take charge of Relief Camps and the children of people killed in riot.

7. The Hindus and Sikhs who are arrested for nothing should be released immediately
8. The minorities should be provided with arms and ammunition for their self protection.
9. Each Member of the Ministry should by turn visit the disturbed area and increase the confidence of the people by his stay there.
10. Badshah Khan should be requested to instruct his Salar of Khudai Khidmat to tour the riot affected area and to create a peaceful atmosphere there.
11. The Relief amount of Rs 25,000 sanctioned by the Frontier Government is highly insufficient. The President of the Frontier PCC: should be requested to provide funds for this purpose. People very badly affected should be given the necessary relief.

Jai Dev Kapur.

7. Communal Disturbances a Result of League Propaganda

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to M.K. Gandhi, 17 January 1947

P.N. Chopra (Ed.), *The Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, Vol. XII, pp. 6–7.

NEW DELHI

REVERED BAPU,

...Yesterday there was a wire from you regarding Hajara district but that matter is under Jawahar's jurisdiction. He has sent his reply by wire.

There the situation is not peaceful. In Hajara district there are nine lac Muslims, 31 thousand Hindus and Sikhs. 20 thousand has left the place. 50 to 60 must have been killed. There was much looting and many buildings were burnt. They are taking revenge of Bihar. In the beginning at two or three places there was widespread looting and buildings were set on fire by frontiers tribes. Therefore local Muslims are indulging in the destructive activities, League is asking people to take revenge of Bihar incidents, and this is result. Badshah Khan has left that place in such horrible incidents, and this has gone to Bihar where everything is quite. But he will do what he thinks proper.

British officers are doing nothing to extinguish fire. They allow the situation to remain as it is. Some are instigating. Khan Saheb is good person but his position is awkward. Poisonous propaganda of League is continuing. So he is afraid to taking a drastic step. Such is the situation at present.

Rajkumari is here. After some time she will be again going to Europe.

VALLABHBHAI'S PRANAM

8. Report from NWFP

Extracts from Fortnightly Report for the NWFP for the First Half of January 1947,
22 January 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/1/1947, NAI.

SECRET.

3. *Communal*.—The situation inside the Hazara District has been bad during the fortnight under report but latest indications disclose an improvement. There are instances of Mohammadaans,

particularly of the rural classes, sheltering Sikhs and Hindus, and inviting those who have fled to return on guarantees of protection.

Arrangements are under way to establish on a more permanent footing and under civil control the refugee camp which the military authorities have started at Kakul near Abbottabad. A special officer of the Provincial Civil Service has been appointed and accommodation arranged. A census of evacuees in Punjab centres has been started.

At the request of the North West Frontier Province Government the Punjab police along the Rawalpindi–Hazara border have agreed to cooperate with the local District authorities inside the Hazara district at points inaccessible from Hazara district centres.

Orders under section 144 Criminal Procedure Code were promulgated earlier in the fortnight at Abbottabad and certain other towns of the Hazara district prohibiting speeches, processions and assemblies of more than live people. As reported in the Press, the Governor has promulgated a public Safety Ordinance. This Ordinance is confined to a penal provision to regulate speeches and dissemination of rumours, and to measures for taking and enforcing village security for safeguarding the property of evacuees. Hitherto it is having a useful effect.

As a special temporary measure the Deputy Commissioner, Hazara, has also been empowered to use certain sections of the Frontiers Crimes Regulations relating to security and collective fines without prior reference to the Provincial Government.

The Oghi border is quiet and it is hoped that the transborder tribes will comply in full with the terms imposed at a Jirga on the 4th January held between tribal representatives and the Commander of the Military Force assembled to enforce submission. The terms then announced were 40 hostages, Rs 75,000 in cash and 75,303 rifles. Rs 28,000 have already been recovered in cash and 7 rifles and 27 valuable hostages surrendered. The tribes have been given up to the 19th of January to comply in full. A Sikh girl who had been kidnapped has been surrendered.

Master Tara Singh visited Abbottabad during the fortnight and was naturally agitated at that he saw and heard.

The Military authorities' assistance in dealing generally with problems in aid of the civil power, and with the refugee situation, has been invaluable.

The exodus of large numbers of Hindus and Sikhs refugees to Rawalpindi and to the Punja Sahib shrine at Hasan Abdal in the Punjab must have caused embarrassment to the Punjab authorities, but the North West Frontier Province Government have received the fullest cooperation from them in all respects, and hope shortly that rehabilitation and relief measures will begin to have effect.

By order, etc.,
D.G.H. de la FARGUE,
Chief Secretary to Government,
North-West Frontier Province.

9. Tribal Raids in Hazara

Jawaharlal Nehru's Speech in the Central Legislative Assembly, 3 February 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 385–7.

The Honourable Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru: (Member for External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations): Sir, the occurrences that took place in Hazara district last month were very

unfortunate and I am sure the whole House will deplore these occurrences. The motions for adjournment read out look upon the affair from two different angles. One seeks to condemn the Government for not taking action; the other seeks to condemn the Government for taking too much action. As a matter of fact, I think this particular incident, deplorable as it is, shows the extreme efficiency of Government in this particular matter, and the extreme leniency of Government also in this particular matter. It is very difficult for Government, for me, to say much about preventing such things happening, because all these things are due to many causes, and it is not an easy matter unless some long distance policy is aimed at. Unfortunately such things do take place. Unfortunately even now people are kidnapped; raids take place on some scale and this House must accept the position that this sort of thing must be stopped. In the present instance, what happened has already been publicly stated in a number of communiqués issued by the Government. We have tried to take the public fully into our confidence right from the beginning. There was, unfortunately, due to certain agitation largely conducted by people coming from outside the Tribal areas and the Frontier Province....

Sir, I wanted to tell the House exactly where matters stand. I want to oppose the motion, because there is no urgency about it. There is no question of anything happening—something happened a month ago. I should like to take the House into my confidence if you will permit me. Otherwise, I merely oppose the motion.

JN: Many of the facts that the Honourable Member has stated are perfectly correct but I should like the Honourable Member to bear in mind that this kind of thing is not new, although certain new factors came in. It is a very difficult matter to deal with these situations, more especially because a certain policy has been followed and it is not easy to change that policy completely and suddenly. I do not think it is correct to say that the various incidents to which the Honourable Member has referred necessarily indicated that there would be a raid. Such incidents are continually happening. There was this raid. It was not on a very big scale but it had disastrous consequences undoubtedly, in that it resulted in killing, looting and burning of property. It lasted for a fairly short time. I cannot exactly state the period. May be the whole thing was over in two or three days' time. Immediately steps were taken. I do not think it is possible to say that the steps subsequently taken were either delayed or inefficient. It may be that if a different policy, a long-term policy, had been acted upon, such things might not have happened but this might equally be said about many other things happening in India. We are the inheritors of past policies, of past legacies and some of them are of such a nature that we cannot change them suddenly. That is why we want independence for this country, so that we may be able to change them quickly and completely....

We had a choice in this matter as to whether we should immediately bomb these territories from the air or not. After very grave consideration, naturally, we were entirely opposed to bombing and we decided that we should not take this step. Our decision was justified by subsequent events because, in effect, the other steps we took had the immediate effect of stopping the trouble. We sent armed forces there and various terms were announced. When the armed forces collected there, the tribes submitted to the terms imposed upon them. The terms were more or less lenient, although one of the adjournment motions refers to them as barbarous terms. The terms imposed upon them were a cash fine of Rs 75,000, a fine of 75 rifles and the surrender of 40 hostages. Now this business of taking hostages and keeping them is certainly not a very desirable one. I may, however, draw the attention of the House to what is happening in the Tribal areas in regard to these raids. That is also extremely barbarous and

medieval and we have to meet that barbarousness somehow and it is for this House to decide. No Government can tolerate raids, murders, kidnapping and the like. We ought, no doubt, to root out the cause of these things but if such things occur, they have to be met with the greatest force necessary for the occasion. It is for the House to decide whether it is better to meet them by air bombing or by armed force....

I am perfectly prepared to discuss it if the subject comes up in the form of a resolution or otherwise. I do not see how it arises on a motion for adjournment. Nothing is happening at the moment and nothing has happened in the last month.

10. Policy to Be Adopted on Tribal Raids

Extracts from Jawaharlal Nehru's Speech in Central Legislative Assembly, 5 February 1947

SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 387-93.

Jawaharlal Nehru: (Member for External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations): ... Sir, of the adjournment motions that come before the House from time to time I venture to say that there has been one with such little justification as this one.... I was anxious also that this matter be debated in this House because there has been so much said and so much is being said directly or obliquely or by insinuation about various things happening in the Frontier that a debate here would probably not only enlighten the House but the country. So far as I am concerned or so far as the Government is concerned inevitably we would have to follow the policy which was commendable to this House and the country. We have no other alternative before us. If a policy suggested by us does not commend itself to the House, we have to change that policy or we have to resign. Therefore, I am glad of this opportunity because we will be able to know at least the temper of the House in regard to such matters. I have no doubt that on future occasions we may have to come up before the House for more guidance and directives as to how we should proceed about the general policy, which we may pursue.

I am glad that the Honourable Mover of this motion has said that there is nothing communal about this. Unfortunately, there is on this subject, though not on this motion, a great deal of communal passion and communal criticism. There is, if I may say so, a great deal of misuse of language. The subject is worthy of discussion, but I do submit to this House that the language of this motion itself and the language that the Honourable Mover used about barbarous inhumanities and other things, is a complete misuse of language or ignorance of language. Some of the facts have been stated and I shall state the facts still further, if necessary.

Now, there are two or three points. This motion is perhaps confined to one particular issue, which is inevitably mixed up with the larger issue of policy in the Frontier. That is a big issue and I do not think I would be entitled to take up the time of the House over it even if I was prepared for it. Nothing has been a greater burden on my mind during these last five months since I have been in charge of my Department than this question of the policy to be pursued on the Frontier. I took an early opportunity to go to the Frontier. Ever since then I have thought about it. I have many ideas on the subject and some of them have been discussed among my colleagues. Ultimately we felt that in view of other developments elsewhere in the Constituent Assembly and in the Advisory Council, which is particularly meant, among other things, to deal with Tribal areas, it would perhaps not be desirable for a new policy to be initiated from the External Affairs Department. So, for this reason as well as for other reasons we did not attempt to initiate that new policy though at the same time inevitably we tried to give a new

orientation to such policies as were being pursued. There were other difficulties, of course, because our problem, whether it is a Frontier problem or any other problem, is connected and is affected by various developments in India. This very instance about which this motion has been brought was in a sense a reflection of something that happened elsewhere in India. And we thought that because of this close connection with all India events, it could not be wholly isolated from them and it had to be taken together. Perhaps an attempt to hasten a change there without due consideration of an all India problem may not yield results or might yield wrong results. In other matters, undoubtedly, as Member in charge of the External Affairs Department, I am fully responsible for anything that may happen in the Frontier in regard to this Department. I do not for an instant deny any responsibility or disclaim it. Nevertheless, the House knows well that any head of the Department has got the machinery and apparatus which he inherits, he cannot function just as he wills unless that machinery and apparatus are changed. Now, Sir, the Frontier machinery and apparatus have been trained in a particular way for over 100 years. It is not so much the question of the present personnel. The personnel there for years past have been trained in a particular way. It is a way with which I have little sympathy and naturally because that policy was laid down long ago with different objectives and today, with an entirely different approach, few people can have sympathy with that policy. I do not propose to argue whether that policy in the past succeeded or failed. But I would certainly submit that it is totally out of keeping with the present day. And so, it was a peculiar question, a big question before us, how far with this present machinery and apparatus of government in the Frontier Province, trained in this past policy, we can use them, how far we can initiate new policies without some other changes also. So, for these reasons we decided not to put forward any radically new policy for the moment, but wait rather for the Advisory Council and the Constituent Assembly to consider these matters. But if, however, occasion arises and some day this policy is to be considered, the House may take it that it will be placed before it for consideration before any vital change is made....

Well, Sir, what happened there in so far as this border raid is concerned? On the 7th and 8th December, 1946, a large body of transborder tribesmen raided the villages of Battal and Oghi. During that raid two market places were burnt down, 15 Hindus and two Muslims were killed, bazaars were burnt and looted. There were other petty outrages in the district. On the next day or two days after, a lorry load of Hindus mainly women and children, who were trying to escape, were stopped and there was a general massacre of the occupants of that lorry. Fourteen were killed, chiefly women and children, and 27 were wounded.

Now, Sir, practically speaking these are the main incidents which happened in connection with this border raid. I have to meet two arguments, firstly that we were slow and lenient, and secondly that we were barbarous and medieval. The two really cancel each other. I put it to the House, I will give the facts to the House and leave the House to judge them. Immediately this happened, within a day or two of it, we were seized of the facts, we gave very earnest consideration to various proposals that were put before us from those in authority in the Frontier over these Tribal areas. The proposals were that we should bomb these territories from the air. The House knows that we have been averse to bombing, we are averse to bombing. Powerful arguments were adduced that this was the safest course, the humanest and the quickest way of putting an end to the problem. We were told that there was danger that if we did not put an end to this, it might spread, it might affect other Tribal territories round about. We were told that the settled areas also were in danger. It was a very difficult proposition for us because

we took the responsibility of the danger of this trouble spreading. On the other hand we were totally averse to this bombing business. I must confess that I spent a very difficult day and very difficult two nights thinking over this problem and consulting others. I came to the conclusion for a variety of reasons that we should not bomb. In the meanwhile we had been waiting for further news about the developments in the Hazara district and this further news confirmed us in our conclusion. It has been suggested by Sardar Mangal Singh that we did not do anything for three weeks till January. Well, Sir, that is not correct. At that time we decided straightaway two things. First, of course that the Frontier constabulary should immediately go there and protect the citizens. Those who were easily available were there within a day or two and they did protect. In fact in one or two places they came into conflict with the raiders. But the bigger operation necessitated troops being collected there. It was decided to send a brigade immediately. But we were informed by the military that it would take some days, it would take about a fortnight before a full brigade could be gathered there. Meanwhile, of course, the House will remember that the armed constabulary and others were protecting the people....

So that while the Frontier constabulary was holding the fort—if I may say so—protecting the people, the brigade was gathering there and it did gather there. When the brigade was there early in January these terms were announced, because there was no point in terms being announced until there was nobody to enforce them. The terms, as the House has already heard, were a fine of Rs 75,000, 75 rifles and 40 hostages. I need not say much about the money part or the rifles, it was undoubtedly lenient. So far as the question of hostages is concerned, it sounds awful, and the Honourable Mover of this motion asked us if we are going: to behead the hostages and the rest of it. As a matter of fact the House will remember that many of these tribesmen are continually taking hostages from us. It is a daily practice and a frequent practice. Every person kidnapped is a hostage held up for ransom and sometimes comes to a worse end. Now the real question before us is how we are to face this contingency and stop this, and I shall be very glad if any Honourable Member would help us in finding a solution. This taking of hostages means keeping certain persons handed over more or less as detenus—not in prison but under some restraint—till the terms are fulfilled and till there is an assurance that no further trouble will occur. It is unfortunately a custom which has been prevailing there for some time past in the Frontier areas. Whether I liked it or not, I did not myself feel justified in coming in the way of the local authorities who have been functioning in that way, and telling them that they must not do this, without being able to give them an alternative. But I prevented them—not I of course but Government prevented them—from indulging in air operations.

If I went on to tell them not to do this or that who was going to be responsible for the safety of the people or the prevention of any further disorder? It sounds awful but I do not think that keeping 40 or 50 or 60 men under restraint is so awful. The House will remember that thousands have been kept under restraint in various parts of India; it is not a measure of barbarity or anything. I do not like it to happen but it really means that certain persons who have misbehaved are kept in detention for a while. So that I do submit that there is nothing in it. We could not have done it previously, perhaps we might; I do not know; but what we did has in effect been justified by events and nothing further has happened. We have to find a balance between two factors; one is that we must make the evil-doers feel that they have done wrong and we must prevent them from continuing it and they must see that if they persist in it they will be punished. The second is, not to go so far as to make them feel humiliated and revengeful so that they may revert to their evil-doing afterwards. That balance is a difficult balance, but I

think in this particular matter we did succeed in arriving at that balance and found some kind of middle way avoiding either extreme. And you can judge from this that since the first two or three days of these raids when a number of murders and looting occurred nothing further has occurred; we could keep them in check, whether with the constabulary or the armed forces. Secondly, when these terms, which are supposed to be terrible, were announced, they were accepted very soon. It was not necessary for our armed forces to enter the Tribal territory; before they entered it they were accepted and part payment was made immediately. I do not know if complete payment has yet been made. But about three-fourths of the payment was made, rifles were given, most of the hostages were given; and the leading Maliks of that area accepted those terms and promised good behaviour. So that such a terrible incident ended in relatively less ill feeling than it might have done; and, as one Honourable Member said, the people who had run away from their homes are returning to their homes. That too is a sign of how soon we are trying to go back to normal conditions.

I do submit that in those conditions Government, whatever their many failings might be, have succeeded remarkably in dealing with this particular situation; and I do submit further that this motion which condemns Government for their barbarity has absolutely no justification whatever. There is no question of barbarity, we dealt with the situation with extreme leniency and justice.

11. Report from NWFP

Extract from Fortnightly Report for the First Half of February 1947 in NWFP,
19 February 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/2/47, NAI.

SECRET,

4. *Communal*.—In Hazara the fortnight has been devoted to further strenuous efforts to restore confidence and towards rehabilitation. The eyes of both communities concerned are still on the case of the Sikh woman reported in some detail a fortnight ago, but there have not been any outbreaks or further demonstrations of excitement. The Sikh woman and her female relatives are now in Peshawar in neutral hands and the question of her future is under consideration. Her Mohammeden protector is still absconding.

By order, etc.,
D.G.H. de la FARGUE,
Chief Secretary to Government,
North-West Frontier Province.

12. Forcible Conversion Triggers Communal Rioting

Letter from Sant Singh Talwar to M.A. Jinnah, 24 February 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 79–81.

PESHAWAR

Respected Quaid-i-Azam,

I am one of those Sikhs who honestly think that the peace and prosperity of Northern India lie in the cordial and brotherly relations of [*sic*] the Muslims and Sikhs. My paper, the *Frontier*

Gazette, Peshawar, will bear me out on this point. We have always maintained very good relations and in the last Muslim League Ministry, the *non-Muslim Minister was a Sikh* gentleman. My paper was the only *non-Muslim paper* which supported the League Ministry throughout very vehemently. Incidentally, I may point out that up till now my paper is on the Congress Government's *black list*. In the present Provincial Assembly, the only *non-Muslim* MLA in opposition is also a Sikh gentleman.

It, therefore, pains me and thousands of other *Sikhs* of my way of thinking to see that once again the eccentric and short-sighted League leaders in the NWFP have started a very damaging agitation on an extremely ill-advised and wrong issue. Whereas in the Punjab some courageous *Sikhs* have joined the League Civil Disobedience Movement for civil liberties, in the NWFP, I regret to say, that eccentric opportunist, Mr Abdul Qaiyum Khan, and fanatically blind Arbab Abdul Ghafoor Khan, started agitation purely on *communal and religious issue*. This ill-conceived move may help Mr Qaiyum and others to win cheap popularity but it has already extremely embittered the sweet relation of [*sic*] the *Sikhs* and the *Muslims* in this tiny province.

The facts of the case are that a widowed Sikh girl named Paisri, aged 22 years, under pain of death was compelled to conversion [*sic*] and marrying [*sic*] a Muslim. She was forced to declare [her conversion to] Islam in the Mosque and gave a statement of this effect to a magistrate in Hazara, where the atmosphere for non-Muslim was very dangerous at that time. When the *Sikh Relief Committee* started work and refilled the *Sikh* with confidence, the fact of Paisri's forcible conversion was brought to their notice. They approached the district authorities and the Ministry for getting back the girl. I must frankly confess that although this minor incident was quite of a minor nature, the Ministry thought it proper to bring the girl to the Headquarters of the Provincial Government. It is surmised in well-informed quarters that this was a clever move on the part of the Ministry to entrap the League leadership in a communal net and thus defame the League in the eyes of the Frontier minorities and, more specifically, the Sikh, who are still out of the Congress. The girl was kept in the Premier's house from 8th to 18th February 1947. When the League leaders learnt about this, they easily fell in the trap and started an agitation. The girl had already stated before the Premier and other that she was forcibly converted and married to a Muslim. The Premier, thereupon, sent for the mother and so-called husband of the girl to Peshawar, and in their as well as in the presence of the European Chief Secretary, the Muslim Deputy Commissioner and the Muslim Superintendent of Police asked the girl to give a statement to the Muslim City Magistrate. All of them assured her that if she was a Muslim she will be allowed to go with her mother. The girl gave the statement that she was always a *Sikh* and that she was forcibly converted to Islam and married to a Muslim.

This should naturally have silenced the wrong and damaging agitation, because *Islam does not permit forcible conversion*. Besides this, from the political viewpoint it was also essential to abandon this bad issue and thus win the confidence of the minorities [to show] that in the Muslim-majority province of Pakistan, *Religion, Culture*, and other rights of the *Minorities* are quite safe. But, as usual, Mr Qaiyum failed to appreciate the dire and a far-reaching consequence of the situation and thought it fit to sacrifice the most important principle for winning cheap popularity. He got himself arrested at Mardan and now both in Mardan and in Peshawar this communal and foolish agitation is going on. May I point out that the Hazara Muslims are more religious and League-minded. Out of the eleven seats of the Assembly, Hazara returned ten League members. There, the Muslims rather welcomed this decision that the girl herself went to the *Sikhs* and there is no agitation at all there. Similarly, the sane and far-sighted Muslims in Peshawar also condemn this wrong agitation and wholly and solely blame Mr Qaiyum and

Arbab Ghafoor for this. Since the move is taking a communal turn and it may now spread to other districts and the Tribal Areas, I, as a true *Sikh* and a true *Frontier man*, request you kindly to intervene and stop this wrong agitation. The *Nawa-i-Waqt* and other sane Muslim papers of the Punjab have also advised the Frontier Muslims to abandon this *un-Islamic* issue and to fight for civil liberties only.

Your immediate or rather telegraphic intervention is eagerly sought, because you are the only one who can stop such wrong moves.

An early reply would highly oblige the *Sikhs* of this province.

My paper, the *Frontier Gazette*, of 24th instant is being sent to you under a separate cover for your kind perusal.

Yours sincerely,
SANT SINGH TALWAR
Editor, Frontier Gazette

13. 'Arson & Looting in Attock Villages'

Extracts from a Report from *The Hindustan Times*, 12 March 1947

LAHORE, 11 March.—**Reports received from several villages from Attock district reveal that communal trouble has spread to the rural areas, according to passengers arriving in Lahore from Rawalpindi.**

The passengers, who were interviewed at the Lahore aerodrome, said that six villages had almost been destroyed. Strong military reinforcements have been dispatched to different villages. Damage to life and property is not yet estimated but it is feared it may be considerable. Many persons have been arrested by the police and the military.

The rural areas of Multan continues to cause anxiety, says a Punjab Government 'communiqué' issued this evening. Looting and burning of villages in these areas continue, the 'communiqué' added.

The trouble in Campbellpur is spreading, according to information reaching Lahore. A Punjab Government official described the situation in Multan as 'very bad,' although there were no fresh incidents in the city today.

The official said: 'The military concentration in Multan where airborne troops are available for action is expected to exercise a sobering effect on the warring elements. The troops will be detailed in disturbed villages in a day or two and the authorities hope that it would bring the situation under control.'

The situation in Rawalpindi city is under control. Some snipers were fired at by the police killing two and injuring five....

The situation in rural areas of Rawalpindi district is still unsatisfactory. Troops are guarding all approaches to the city. The intruders, who had raided the town on the first day of the rioting, were still lurking about, the travellers added....

Attendance in office establishments was thin. The local bus service under military escort resumed service today. Mails still remain undelivered.

The District Magistrate, Rawalpindi, has issued a proclamation that military has been authorized to shoot any person found rioting, committing loot and incendiarism. Persons who refuse to surrender their arms when ordered are also liable to be shot at. Assembly of more than five persons who refuse to obey order to disperse will also be shot at.

Brigadier Hobb has been placed in charge of Murree, and all families belonging to minority communities have been shifted to the northern Command Depot and are being looked after by the military. According to travellers, the Mall and the lower Bazar in Murree are safe.

The Eastern Punjab is free from trouble, although the atmosphere is tense, adds the announcement.

None of the disturbed towns had anything disquieting to report up to this evening.

14. Communal Situation in NWFP

Extracts from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Wavell, 13 March 1947

SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 296–7.

Dear Lord Wavell,

...In the Frontier Province the agitation led by the Muslim League has now definitely taken a communal turn. The demands of the Muslim League there have been, and are, refund of the fines levied on and realized from the Nandihar tribes in the Hazara area and the return of a Sikh woman who was forcibly converted and I believe raped. These demands are very extra-ordinary. You know the circumstances in which action was taken against the Nandihar tribes and a relatively moderate fine was imposed upon them. This fine was agreed to and has in fact been paid. No further operations were undertaken. To ask for the return of this fine is to put an end to the whole administration of the tribal areas. Also, to ask for the return of the Sikh woman is fantastic and immoral. She was forcibly taken away and she does not want to return. She has been mishandled and ill-treated. The question to consider should be what punishment to inflict on those who treated her in this way. Instead of this a demand is put forward by the Muslim League and supported by agitation for her return to her original captors. No government can agree to such demands, whatever the consequences.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. Report from NWFP

Extracts from Fortnightly Report for the First Half of March 1947 in the NWFP,
15 March 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.

SECRET.

2. *Political and Communal*.—Events in the Province during the last fortnight have proceeded from those reported at the beginning of the month. Apart from the Hazara district, where earlier butcheries derived from Bihar, communal trouble now flourishing in other parts of the Province dates from the day on which the Budget Session of the Assembly commenced in the absence of many prominent Muslim League MLAs. who were (and still are) in jail under security sections including section 4 Frontier Crimes Regulation or on charges of bailable offences. On that day a large and ugly crowd on the railway embankment in the vicinity of the Assembly Hall was opposed by military forces who were compelled to open controlled fire. As far as can be ascertained 9 rounds were fired resulting in about 15 casualties of which 2 have so far died. This incident was followed by attacks on Hindus and Sikhs in the City

and the round-up of several Sikh families in a cluster of villages on the Kohat road about 10 miles south of Peshawar. Three Sikhs in this round-up were murdered and about 40 forcibly converted. These are still detained by Muslim villager but no brutalities have been inflicted on them as far as is known. Measures to effect their release are being concerted. From then on communal outbreaks have continued to occur and have been reported in a series of situation reports to the Government of India. The latest confirmed report has been a raid on Chajian village south-east of Haripur in the Hazara district and the massacre there of about 50 Hindus. This latest horror has naturally accentuated the refugee problem in the Hazara District. So far communal trouble has been practically solely confined to the Hazara and Peshawar Districts. Mass agitation organized by the Muslim League against the Ministry has continue unabated, but unaccompanied by murderous violence, in the Kohat, Mardan and Dera Der Ismail Khan districts. It is also in evidence in the Bannu district, where, in addition, two assaults of a communal nature have occurred. Bans under section 144 continue in many centre, but except on arms have not been revived in the Hazara district. A curfew has been imposed in Peshawar City during recent night and also two or three times in the Saddar areas of Cantonment. British troops have been in occupation the City, and it is hardly too much to say that only ready and whole-hearted assistance by Military Commanders has saved Peshawar and Hazara from complete or at least serious disintegration. As reported at the time all telephone and telegraph communications leading from Peshawar were cut on the night of the 9th March.

By order. etc.,
D.G.H. de la FARGUE.
Chief Secretary to Government.
North-West Frontier Province.

16. 'NWFP Men Raiding Punjab Villages'

The Tribune, 19 March 1947.

PESHAWAR, 18 March.—The Frontier Government received a complaint yesterday from the Punjab Government that Frontier men were crossing the Indus river and raiding villages in the North-West Punjab.

The evacuation of Sikh and Hindu families from the disturbed areas of the North-West Frontier Province continued yesterday. The number of refugees was reliably estimated at about 6,000.

The authorities stated that they themselves had evacuated about 2,000. They said this number did not include those who had left of their own accord.

Military and police patrols are keeping constant watch and making daily checks in villages where there are fairly large Sikh and Hindu minorities, particularly around Peshawar and in the unsettled Hazara district, near the Punjab border.

There were no official reports of any violence in the province on Monday. Hindus and Sikhs compose only 4 per cent of the 3 million population of the province.

Hindus and Sikhs in Peshawar twice refused to open their shops and special rations had to be distributed by the authorities. Shopkeepers did this, despite the advice of police and other civil authorities, fearing fatal assaults.—APA.



17. 'NWFP Minister Brings 2000 Red Shirts to Peshawar'

21 March 1947

Report from *Pakistan Times* cited in *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 351.

PESHAWAR, 19 March: About 2,000 Red Shirt volunteers have arrived here from Charsadda Tehsil (18 miles north of Peshawar) to 'check violence non-violently and to restore confidence among Hindus and Sikhs in Peshawar,' said Mr Mohammad Yahya Jan, Minister for Local Self Government at a press conference on Tuesday.

Mr Yahya, who had dressed himself in the red uniform of Khudai Khidmatgars, revealed that the only reason for their coming was, assist the 30,000 Hindus and Sikhs of Peshawar to regain their confidence.

This is the first experiment of its kind being tried in the Frontier.

The Red Shirts have camped in the southern part of the city in two groups.—API.

18. Prevent Disintegration of NWFP

Extract from a Letter from Olaf Caroe to Louis Mountbatten, 22 March 1947

TOP, Vol. X, pp. 1-2.

CONFIDENTIAL

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, PESHAWAR

2. Here are we between the storm-ridden Punjab on one side and the tribes on the other, and in the strange position of having a Congress Government which has—or had—a considerable Moslem backing. But the influence of the North-Western Punjab to the East and the tribes to the West—all declaiming against Hindu-Sikh domination—is, I think, certain to squeeze Congress out before long, for Congress is not natural here. The shifting of the balance might have happened before if the League had had any leaders to compare with the Khan Brothers. The tribal attitude is beginning to crystallize under the leadership of the Afridis, and I wrote to Abell a few days ago to explain how this was working out. Here I will only say that the attitude of the longer-headed tribes-men and of the League also, in so far as they have thought at all, is to keep the tribes in reserve until the time comes when we have to hand over, and not to get them embroiled while we are still here. Meanwhile I think the elements that count in the tribes will refuse to deal either with Congress or with the League separately, and that there will be a more or less effective tribal boycott of any attempt by the present Constituent Assembly to send up an Advisory Committee.

3. Our disorders here have not approached the Punjab rages in fury. But there has been butchery of defenceless minorities in villages of Peshawar and Hazara and some forcible conversions. The Ministry have survived the first shock, and with the aid of troops (who had to fire on a protest demonstration) have managed to carry through the budget session of the Assembly with the Opposition in jail. So much for democratic processes. I shortened the session, which finishes, I am glad to say, to-day. The only new feature is the bringing into Peshawar City of Red Shirts. For the moment this has sent Congress stock up, but it was a totalitarian move and as such will bring its revenges, more particularly as it has been undertaken by a party whose power is by no means consolidated on this frontier.

4. As I see my job during the next year it is to prevent the disintegration of the North-West Frontier. The more I think of it the more I am struck by the refusal of the Cabinet Mission to face up squarely to this question. Their statement scarcely mentioned the land frontier or the

tribes, who also fail to figure in the Prime Minister's statement of 20th February. Yet they are just as vital to India as the State. The various forces acting on this frontier, particularly since the 20th February statement, may produce a resultant [? disturbance] which will even cause this part of India to fly off into space, and I think all our efforts in these parts during the next year should be directed to ensure that there is an orderly handing over India's land frontier in a state of stability. For this is one of the most essential needs of the new India, and a considerable amount of force up to the end will be need to secure it. But not one word have we ever been able to get out of His Majesty's Government on this subject. The tribes in their hearts even now won't recognize that power will be handed over. (They regard themselves as realist, and what is more they are so.) They are certainly anxious about their position, and would much rather go on with an orderly balance which secures them the considerable benefits they enjoy at present than have to face the chaos which at one time was supposed to suit the Pathan outlook. One thing is certain, and that is that they will in no sense submit to any local control which could remotely represent as exercised by a Hindu-dominated Government.

19. Atrocities on Hindus and Sikhs in the Frontier

Extract from a Letter from Devprakash Shastri to V.G. Deshpande (Translated from Hindi), Undated, c. March 1947
AIHM Papers, File No. C-150, NMML.

Om

Respected Deshpande ji,
Greetings.

I was upset to hear on the radio that your visit has been stopped. Brother, here, from Jhelum to Peshawar, Muslims have devastated the Hindus; no village or town is left where Hindus and Sikhs have not been killed and converted to Islam. The districts of Jhelum, Rawalpindi and Campbellpur have been totally wiped out. Hospitals are full of thousands of wounded. Trains full of corpses are coming in. Almost all Hindus and Sikhs have been made Muslims. Why these atrocities? ...humanity teaches this. Holi is being played with the blood of Hindus. Are you people asleep? Brother, the Hindu community should show some power in their area. Only you people can stop the terrible atrocities being wreaked on the Hindu community here. The Hindu Mahasabha should now adopt a programme of war. The insult should be avenged by going from village to village. The Hindu community is going through a terrible time now. At this time Gandhi cannot be the protector of the Hindu community; all his schemes have failed. Kindly resolve to visit the rural areas for a propaganda campaign....The times of Aurangazeb are dancing before our eyes. If you were here, you would undoubtedly have cried....My friend will also relate the entire story to you. You must introduce him to Patel. He is a Sangh preacher in Kohat, You should take the trouble of visiting Peshawar by air to see how these people have reduced Hindus to rats in their holes. I hope you will ponder over this and arrange matters after consulting the ministers of the Interim Government. Krishna Baldev ji will tell you all these things.

...Yours
Devprakash Shastri,
Harnam Gali, Peshawar Cantonment.

F. PUNJAB

1. 'Police Open Fire in Lahore: Hindu & Sikh Students Lathi-charged'

Extracts from a Report from *The Tribune*, 5 March 1947

LAHORE, 4 March.—On the very first day of the minorities' demonstration against the proposed imposition of a communal majority rule on the Punjab, the police resorted to firing seven times and lathi-charged the demonstrators about a dozen times....

In the firing by the police five times in the Gol Bag area and DAV College about 60 persons were injured of whom 27 were admitted into the Mayo Hospital and Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

Then there was a communal clash near Chauk Matti in the city which resulted from a procession of demonstrators being attacked. There was free fight in which lathis, hatchets, knives and brick-bats were used. About 60 to 70 persons were injured many of whom were admitted into the hospitals and six of these are reported to have died. Two were killed at the spot and others died in hospital. Some of the injured persons are lying in a precarious condition.

Two police constables are also reported to have been killed to-day and two who were said to be missing returned by the evening....

The non-League sections of the Lahore population headed by Hindu and Sikh students of the local colleges took out processions raising anti-Pakistan slogans against the proposed ministry for the Punjab, and against the Punjab Governor.

These processions consisted mostly of students who gathered together from various colleges and were proceeding towards the Gol Bagh where they wanted to hold a protest meeting...

These processions of students were confronted by the police at various places who lathi-charged them in order to disperse them...

A huge procession then marched along the Mall Road to hold a demonstration in front of the Assembly buildings. On the way the procession was met by Sir Bhim Sen Sachar who addressing them in front of the General Post Office appealed to the processionists to remain peaceful and do nothing that would injure anybody's feelings. On the pressing request of the processionists Mr Sachar agreed to lead them towards the Assembly Building where the procession proceeded....

It is alleged that there was some trouble outside Mochi Gate also. Passers-by were assaulted. Police arrived at the spot and opened fire to frighten away the crowd.

The firing at the DAV College Hostel followed chase by the police of some students who were standing on the Lower Mall near the SD High School at about 6 p.m. These students are alleged to have raised slogans when a police lorry was going on the road. The lorry is stated to have been stopped and the police chased the students who went towards the DAV College Hostel. The police, it is alleged, chased them and then opened fire. As a result of this, a IV Year student of the DAV College Mr Rattan Chand who was standing in his room was killed instantaneously. The matter was reported to the authorities by the Principal.

It is alleged that during the morning one police motor vehicle was set on fire near Gol Bag.

Mr Abdul Aziz, President of the Punjab Students Congress writes:

'The Punjab Police lathi charged and opened fire today on a peaceful procession of students on its way to Gol Bag for holding a meeting there. The police attack was absolutely unprovoked

and at a number of places even pedestrians were not spared. Almost all the important workers of the Students Congress have been injured, some are still in danger. The Government knows that these injured students are the last persons to be aggressive. I warn the Government, therefore, that such things will rather aggravate the seriousness of the situation, than make it easy. I demand an impartial enquiry into the conduct of the police, and punishment of the culprits responsible for firing.’...

2. ‘Anti-Pakistan Day’ in Punjab

Note from Deputy Private Secretary to Viceroy to Vallabhbhai Patel, 5 March 1947
IOR, R/3/1/89, Acc. No. 3414, NAI.

The Congress and the Akali Sikhs propose to hold an Anti-Pakistan Day all over the Punjab on the 11th March. Patel may be asked to get the Congress High Command to discourage this demonstration, which may be very dangerous. He has frequently complained that Muslim League Members of the Cabinet have no right to encourage demonstrations against the Government of the Punjab, and must act up to this now.

2. A procession is reported to have been led yesterday by Bhim Sen Sachar, a Congress Minister in the Punjab. This was done in spite of the fact that processions were illegal and has provided a very bad example.

3. Cannot the Congress make an all out effort for unqualified acceptance of the Cabinet Mission’s plan?

DPSV

3. ‘Punjab Situation Takes Serious Turn’

Extracts from a Report from *Dawn*, 6 March 1947

LAHORE, Wednesday

British troops have been called out in Lahore and the District Magistrate has imposed a curfew order from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. for 10 days.

Communal trouble spread throughout the city and stray assaults have been reported from several quarters. A large number of injured have been brought to civil and other hospitals. Though the exact number cannot be gathered, they are about 90 while 18 are reported to be dead. The District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police are personally supervising arrangements. Great panic prevails in the city and cases of arson have also been reported....

‘Stop Killing’, Mamdot Appeals to Opposition

LAHORE, Wednesday.

An appeal to Hindu and Sikh leaders to come forward and co-operate in forming peace committees to restore peace and order in the Province has been issued by the Khan of Mamdot, President of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League.

He says, ‘The communal rioting, killing, arson, and loot which have broken out in Lahore and certain other places in the Punjab are most regrettable and deserve strong and unreserved condemnation by every right-thinking person owing to the sudden quitting of the office by the caretaker Government under Section 93 of the Government of India Act.

Even though the Administration's responsibility rests on the Governor for the time being, the leaders of communities and parties must not overlook their own responsibility to their people who can gain nothing and can only suffer untold miseries owing to this outburst of communal madness.

It is the duty of all of us to make a joint effort to end this terrible state of affairs. I, therefore, invite Hindu and Sikh leaders to come forward so that we may co-operate in forming one or more peace committees to restore peace and order in the province.'—API.

4. Communal Trouble in Punjab

Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 7 March 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 67–8.

Immediate

Confidential

No. 32-G

Addressed Viceroy repeated Secretary of State. Punjab situation. Lahore has been quieter today but tension is still acute and stabbing cases continue. Amritsar showed little change this morning though arrival of Police reinforcements effected slight improvement. Lahore Area Commander put two British Battalions into City at 14.00 hours with instructions to restore order particularly by disarming rioters and searching for arms. He has just returned (19.00 hours) and reports that on arrival of troops populace and arms disappeared completely. People have been forbidden to leave their houses for 48 hours and situation was completely under control when he left. Searches will continue tomorrow. Rawalpindi gravely disturbed since noon 6th. Hospital casualties 20 dead 100 injured. Total casualties may be double these figures. Trouble has spread to villages in Rawalpindi Division. Frontier Mail was attacked near Taxila today also train at Chaklala. Details not reported. Cars are being attacked on roads. Three casualties reported. Sialkot reported casualties up to this morning 3 dead 11 injured. Multan under control but trouble continues. Jullundur reported 7 dead 35 injured up to 6th evening and 4 more casualties this morning. Communal tension reported from almost all districts and further outbreaks likely.

5. Formation of Peace Committees

Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 7 March 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, p. 68.

Immediate

Confidential

No. 33-G

Repeated to Secretary of State for India. Punjab situation. My immediately preceding telegram. Mamdot has made no further move. Peace Committee has been formed in Lahore by Mamdot, other League leaders and leaders of Congress and Sikhs. I suspect that Mamdot is not anxious to assume responsibility for present situation and I cannot blame him. Lahore Sikhs are threatening to take out Hola procession tomorrow but it is hoped to make them see sense. Situation still very bad but if Amritsar is cleared up by tomorrow night it should improve.



6. 'Punjab's Baptism'

Extract from an Editorial in *Dawn*, 8 March 1947

While by tacit consent of the Muslim League Premier-designate, Governor's Rule fills the interregnum between the fall of the old Ministry and the advent of the new, over considerable areas of long quiescent Punjab rioting, arson and murder continue to mark the last-ditch stand of communal vested interests. However deplorable, there was perhaps an inevitability about the disorders that commenced in Lahore on Wednesday and later spread to some other towns. And if the Punjab has to pass through its baptism of fire and blood, well, it has to. But there is one fact about which there can be no dispute, for we believe that the militant elements who precipitated these disorders will not be so cowardly as to deny that the responsibility falls fairly and squarely on their shoulders, not on those of the Muslims. For 34 days full of stress Muslims showed exemplary spirit of non-violence, not being provoked to retaliation even when an assassin's brick killed one of their number on Beadon Road. When their movement brought the Ministry crashing down, they were humble in their hour of triumph. They ignored Master Tara Singh's threat, broadcast to the world *via* the United States, that he would 'drive the Muslims out of the Punjab', and they begged him and his community to cooperate. They promised the minorities that although they might well claim it they would not dominate over the latter, because that was not the Islamic way....

We trust that the situation in the Punjab will soon return to normal and Sikh and other minority leaders will likewise return to the path of reason. The Khan of Mamdot has pointed out that between the Muslims and the Sikhs at any rate there are many things in common, although the latter's vision has been purposely warped by Congress propaganda for the time being. If what is happening now helps to clarify that vision, all this loss of life, limb and property may not have been in vain. Master Tara Singh and his fellow leaders of the Panth will do well to ask themselves just what they are waving their kirpans and injuring their larynxes for. To establish Sikh-Hindu *minority domination* over the Muslim majority? If so, perhaps the noise that their tongues make prevents them from hearing the counsel which their brains must be trying to give them. The minorities have many rights and must needs be granted them, but in politics and statecraft the tail can never wag the dog. Short of this, there is little else within reason which the Muslim League will be found unprepared to concede either to the Sikhs or the Hindus, provided the latter gracefully accept the inevitable leadership of the majority. Muslims do not want to rule the Punjab by themselves, but they cannot force partnership in power on those who would not have it. In that event their own broad shoulders will have to bear the burden.

7. Communal Violence in Rawalpindi

Report of Satnam Kaur, Village Mogul, Rewat Tehsil, Rawalpindi, Undated
AIHM Papers, File No. C-165, NMML.

On Saturday the 8th of March '47 at about 12 p.m. Muslim mob surrounded the village Mogul from all the sides. They shouted slogans of Pakistan Zindabad. They made entry into the village and started putting to fire to the houses in the Dhok. This Dhok was inhabited only by Sikhs. The Sikhs of the village had all collected in the main Gurudwara along with the women folk and the children in order to give a joint defence. They had only two guns with them from

which some shots were fired in return of the volleys of bullets fired by the Muslims ruffians who were putting the houses to fire after looting them under the covering bullets. The petrol and kerosin oil was freely used by the mob. Our house was set on fire by Babares tailors of Dhok Daraian. Prehlad, Mehtab, Gurbachan and others saw this. The process of looting went on upto 5 a.m. next morning that is Sunday. The Muslim leaders then deputed posts on all outlets of the village so that no inmate of the village may go out. Each and every house was then searched and all valuable and useful things taken away by the mob on donkeys, bullock-carts and camels, and on other things, and these remaining houses after being thus looted were put to fire. The fanatic mob was not satisfied with the booty and they turned to the main Gurdwara, where the inmates bewailed and requested the mob for their lives telling that they should be satisfied with the merciless looting and ruthless acts of putting to fire their houses. There were only 180 persons in the Gurdwara including women and children. The Muslim mob started throwing stones inside the Gurdwara and began firing bullets. One Subedar of Durna village tried to appease the furious mob but nobody paid any heed to the saying and he was sent back. More Muslim ruffians began pouring into the village and the mob grew over a thousand persons who completely surrounded the village and the Gurdwara. Harnam Singh a prominent man of the village requested the mob for the lives of the inmates but persons armed with guns and riffles, hatchets, swords and sticks started shouting Pakistan Zinda Bad and began to fire guns and riffles. Stones were also thrown inside the Gurdwara. Harnam Singh was the first to shot through the neck and then my father-in-law Mehal Singh who tried to appease the mob was shot dead by Mohd Khan Havaladar whom the inmates recognized well. My husband then came in front to request they should cease firing but nobody listen to him. The Gurdwara building was then set to fire. As the heat became unbearable the women and children shrieked and the men lost heart. The mob was asked to forgive the inmates their lives who replied the two guns and swords, sticks etc. may be thrown down and then their lives will be restored. This was readily agreed to and the gun and swords etc., was handed over to the Muslim mob. The inmates came down into the streets from the Gurdwara roof. All of us were taken into the Haveli or Makhan Singh where Kazim of Daducha village shouted to the mob that they should see either we are forcibly converted into Islam or mercilessly butchered. Man Kaur, Ishar Prehlad, Gurbachan, Joginder Kaur and some others are still alive. and can tell about the occurance. All the Sikhs yielded. The mob then suggested that women folk should be separated from men and taken to a separate place. Our men refused to do this. The men were allowed to seek shelter with their respective families into the houses of the persons known to them. In the meanwhile as some of the families had just moved more people from the surrounding villages poured in who persisted that every Sikh women and child must be killed and the body giving shelter will be similarly dealt with. My family then consisting of eleven alive members (my husband Puran Singh, his mother, his four younger brothers, his two sisters, his brother's wife, and my ten month's old daughter and myself) ran towards the Mughal Pari Dhok of Muslims and concealed ourselves in the grain field as one Shafi of Mughal village where we intended taking shelter was threatened by his ... that offering protection to us will mean death for him. Some mob happened to see us in the grain field and ran towards ... hatchets but some of them recognized us as belonging to the family of Hohi Singh, my father-in-law and moved by our bewailing they went away. We again went to the house of Shafi at night, Sunday; but early in the morning he turned us out in spite of our repeated requests not to do so and we again concealed ourselves in the grainfield. We were again pointed out by some of the members

of the mob who came shouting towards us. They told us to accompany them to our burning village stating that some of our persons were still alive. We refused to go but we were forcibly pushed and taken to the village. Karim, Channu, Akbar, Fazal Akram son of Sain Jahana, Mohd Khan Havaladar, Mohd Aslam, Maulavi, all of village Mughal. Aurangzeb, Nawab, Nur Hussain, Mohd Ghauz, ... of village Mughal Benarea, Karam Elahi of Dhok Darzian, Wedi son of Fazal Dad of Dhok Fazal Dad, Mohd Zaman of Chak, Inamkhaur Abdul Razaq and many others whom I cannot name but can recognize, took us to the place where dead bodies of the inmates of the Gurdwara were burning. My husband, Puran Singh shouted for his and our lives but the fanatic mob did not listen to his pathetic appeal and started stoning at us. I and my husband's sister Nain Kaur (young girls) were pushed aside as Wadi Hussain and others had some evil motives towards us. Karim caught hold of my husband and threw him down and then everybody named above hurled stones at the ten members of my family with the result that they were done to death by stones. Several bodies of Sikh men women and children alive and dead were soon burning in the Gurdwara and its vicinity. My husband's brother's wife, Sujan Kaur was thrown into the burning fire by Channu son of Mohd Shaffi after he had taken off her clothes. I and my husband's sister Nain Kaur were taken away by Wadi Hussain son of Fazal Dad and Sain Juhana respectively. I cried and shouted and refused to live at Wadi's house as I suspected his intention. I wanted to put an end to my life but very strict watch was kept on me. Wadi's sister's husband was moved by my bewailing and took me to his house where I stayed for two days. One Sain of Gujrat solaced me that I would not be dishonoured and when ever the rescue party comes I will be handed over to my relatives. My husband's sister Nain Kaur also came running to the place where I was confined and we both stayed there for the Tuesday night. On Wednesday at 2 a.m. the Military Rescue Party accompanied by Darshan Singh of village Moghul came to Dhok Fazal Dad and brought us to the Relief Camp at Rawalpindi.

8. Punjab Governor's Tour of Riot Afflicted Areas

Letter from Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 9 March 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 902-6.

I am greatly obliged for the loan of Your Excellency's aircraft. I flew in it to Rawalpindi this morning and had a conference with the Army Commander, the Rawalpindi Area Commander (Key), the Commissioner, the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, and the Deputy Commissioner. Bennett, the Inspector-General of Police, accompanied me.

2. I gave the conference an appreciation of the situation in the Punjab as a whole. I have already reported events very fully to Your Excellency and need not go over them again in this letter. I ended my appreciation by saying that Lahore, Amritsar, Multan and Rawalpindi had all been seriously disturbed; that there had been smaller disturbances at Sialkot, Jullundur, Kamoke in the Gujranwala district, and one or two other places; and that communal tension was acute in almost all districts. The danger points were Lahore, Amritsar, Multan and Rawalpindi. Lahore was now under control but was still most uneasy, and incidents in Lahore always affected the rest of the Punjab. Amritsar had probably had the worst outbreak yet reported. The known casualties were not particularly high, but there had been an enormous amount of damage by incendiarism, and the City was without electric light, vegetables and fodder for its innumerable cattle. Multan city and Cantonment were reported to be under control, but the trouble was spreading rapidly to the rural areas. The District authorities had at their disposal

only their normal strength of Police *plus* small police reinforcements and a weak battalion of the 3rd Dogra Regiment. They had asked for further help. Those present would know more than I did about the details of the Rawalpindi situation.

In the past communal trouble had seldom occurred in two important places at the same time. We had therefore been able to concentrate our resources and to come down very quickly on each outbreak as it occurred. On this occasion, however, outbreaks had been widespread, and it had been impossible for us to reinforce at all points simultaneously. We had had to leave it to District Officers and the local Military Commanders to deal with each situation as it arose.

There were two very disturbing factors in the situation. In the first place, the Sikhs regarded the Muslim League agitation and the present communal disturbances as an attack particularly upon them. They felt that they had suffered more than the Muslims and had been caught unprepared. They were therefore likely to have their revenge, and if trouble spread to the rural areas in Muslim districts and was not checked, we must expect similar trouble in Sikh districts and later in the Ambala Division where the Hindu Jats are dominant. Secondly, the resolution of the Congress Working Committee on the Punjab, which appeared in this morning's newspapers, demanded the partition of the Punjab and would almost certainly be treated by the Muslims as a challenge. Unfortunately the resolution had been accompanied by a Joint statement of Congress and Sikh leaders in the Punjab to the effect that they are 'in no circumstances willing to give the slightest assurance or support to the Muslim League in the formation of a Ministry', as they 'are opposed to Pakistan in any shape or form'. In the light of the Sikh attitude and of the resolution and statement it appeared to me that we might be faced with persistent communal trouble gradually spreading to the rural areas all over the Punjab. A coalition now seemed most improbable; the Muslims would insist upon Pakistan, which they are still quite unable to define; and the Hindus and Sikhs would demand the Ravi as the boundary of the non-Muslim State....

4. The Rawalpindi Area Commander then gave an appreciation of the local situation. During the last four days there had been several serious incidents. Rawalpindi City had been disturbed with a good many casualties, but was now under control. The trouble had quickly spread to the rural areas, and there had been an organized raid on Murree by a party of Muslims in cars or lorries. These persons had attacked mainly property belonging to Kirpa Ram (the well-known draper), and several large buildings including at least three hotels, had been burnt. There were five companies of troops in or near Murree, but the raid was cleverly carried out and substantial contact with the raiders does not seem to have been made. At about the same time there was an attack on the Frontier Mail at Taxila. The area bounded, by the Grand Trunk Road from Taxila to Gujar Khan and eastwards by a line drawn roughly from Gujar Khan through Kahuta, Murree and back to Taxila was disturbed. (About six villages were to be seen burning as we approached Rawalpindi in the aircraft this morning.) A Battalion of Gurkhas had been sent to Murree, and Military patrols, including detachments from the Norfolks, were operating in the disturbed area and along the Grand Trunk Road. Railway Security had been introduced from Taxila to Jhelum, but trains were not yet running northward of Rawalpindi. The disturbed area is full of crowds of villagers armed with *lathis*, spears, axes, agricultural implements, and in some cases firearms. One or two patrols had been fired on, but on the whole the people showed little hostility to authority as such.

The Commissioner and DIG, Police, said that no estimate could be made of casualties in the villages. There was reason to think that in several villages the Hindus had been massacred. The Deputy Commissioner said that he was making arrangements in consultation with the Area

Commander for the accommodation of refugees; but he did not wish to invite non-Muslims to leave their villages since in many villages the Muslims were definitely protecting them.

5. The civil authorities seemed to have no special needs, and I said that my only comment on what I had heard was that although most of us knew a great deal about the suppression of communal disturbances in cities, we had had little experience of dealing with such disturbances in a large rural area with bad communications... The Army Commander remarked that if communal trouble developed in the rural parts of a large number of districts, it would be virtually uncontrollable—the DIG of Police had already observed that conditions in many of the villages affected were not known, since they were approachable only by bridle-paths or tracks, and it took a long time to deal with them.

6. All the civil officials present said that there was a certain amount of moderate Muslim opinion in favour of peace, but that the local notables dared not co-operate with the authorities, as they would have done under the old official *règime* or a Unionist Ministry, because they felt that they must keep in with their party. The right solution therefore was to announce that the Section 93 *règime* would continue for a specified period in the first instance—say, for three months. If this were done, the local notables would come down on the side of the Administration for the time being at least. This opinion is interesting from civil officials serving in a Muslim area, since they tend to discount the case for the minorities and the seriousness of communal trouble.

7. The Commissioner mentioned some indiscipline among the police. The incident was discussed after the conference by the IG and the DIG, and I gathered that it was not really serious.

8. The conference was, I think, useful, and I am very glad that troops are being sent to Multan and that the Army Commander has secured an additional Brigade. I hope to go to Multan in the same way tomorrow morning. The Lahore Area Commander and the Inspector-General of Police will accompany me, and the Army Commander has ordered the Brigadier who is taking the two airborne Battalions in to stay at Multan tomorrow until he has seen me. On Tuesday I hope to visit Jullundur and Ambala.

9. I found Abell's letter No. 90/13 of 8th March to Abbott awaiting me on my return. The resolution of the Congress Working Committee and the statement by the Congress and Sikh leaders of the Punjab may alter the situation for the worse. It is almost certain that the resolution and the statement were co-ordinated and that the Congress and the Sikhs would meet the formation of a Muslim League Government by a demand for instant partition. I shall have to wait for a day or two to study Muslim reactions. The Muslim League will, I fear, treat the resolution and statement as a challenge it seems that they are still trying to form a Ministry with a small technical majority. As soon as Muslim reactions are clear, I will see what can be done to mediate; but I have little hope of success, and there is an unpleasant undercurrent in the resolution and the statement which may mean that the Congress intend to turn the heat on the British officials and myself....

11. ...A great deal of political intrigue is going on in Lahore. Some persons were stabbed in Lahore yesterday, but today has been reasonably quiet so far. The curfew came off for four hours in Amritsar at 10 a.m. today, and at 1-10 p.m. Intelligence reported that there had been no incidents. Amritsar casualties seen by the Civil Surgeon now amount to 100 dead (Muslims 64, Sikhs 31, Hindus 4, and Christian 1) and 151 injured (Muslims 97, Sikhs 27 and Hindus 27); but the city is still full of fallen buildings and rubble and the real casualties must be considerably higher. The figures do not bear out the Sikh contention, which is true of

Rawalpindi and Lahore, that the Muslims have been victorious. In Amritsar they were on top for some time, but the Sikhs seem to have got into a Muslim quarter and killed a large number of the inhabitants in one operation.

12. It is most unfortunate that our affairs are controlled for the Muslims from Bombay and for the Hindus (including for the moment the Sikhs) from Delhi. We will do our best to keep the trouble out of the rural areas; but if we fail, widespread massacres are inevitable and we may have to concentrate on the points where we can protect most people.

9. Communal Incidents in Gujarkhan, Rawalpindi

First Information Report by Moti Ram Singh, Undated
AIHM Papers, File No. C-165, NMML.

The District Magistrate,
Rawalpindi.

Subject: FIR of Moti Ram Singh S/o B.K. Nihal Chand caste Gupta resident of village Bewal Police Stn, Gujarkhan, District Rawalpindi at present refugee at Gujarkhan Khalsa School.

Sir,

On 9-3-'47 at about 4 p.m., we Hindu and Sikhs residents of village Bewal, saw some houses in village Qazian on fire and we came to know that the Muslim rioters had looted and set fire to the houses of Hindus and Sikhs of the surrounding villages. We also apprehended danger and so S. Mukand Singh and myself approached Ch Miran Dad of village Samet and Suba Sadiq Inamkhor of Bhatian who were at that time present in our village. They demanded Rs 1,200 and promised to protect us. We agreed and Mukand Singh paid Rs 1,200 in my presence to Ch Miran Dad. Night between 9th and 10th March passed off peacefully without any incident.

On 10-3-'47 Muslim rioters from the surrounding villages began to collect round our village at 11 a.m. Most of the Hindu and Sikh ladies and children of the village collected in the house of S. Gokul Singh, Retired EAG.

By 12 p.m. about five to six thousand Muslim rioters armed with guns, pistols, hatchets, spears, swords and sticks began to attack the village on all the sides and began to break open the doors of the shops and houses of Hindus and Sikhs and looting and burning them. The following persons were leading the rioters:

1. Mirza Khan Zaildar of Rewal.
2. Khadim Hussain Sarbrah Siladar, Bewal.
3. Banka, S/o Fazla of Bewal.
4. Subha Sadiq Inamkhor of village Mohra Bhatian.
5. Jamadar Mustaffa of village Dhera Kanial.
6. Subedar Bagh Ali of Dhera Kanial.
7. Gulab Lohar of Bewal.
8. Sh Mohd Yusaf of Dhera Kanial.
9. Mohd Azim of Taxi Driver.

10. Wali Ahmed of Bewal.
11. Ali Akbar S/o Subedar Mutwali of Dhera Kanial.
12. Mohd Akbar S/o -do-
13. Usfar Ali Retd LI of Police Burma of Dhera Kanial.
14. Gulzar, Post Master, Bewal.
15. Lt Mirain of village Samot.
16. Jamadar Rahman Ali of Bewal.
17. Nathu Gangal of Bewal.
18. Jahandad S/o Sheraf Din of Bewal.
19. Fazal Krim Mochi of Dhok Telian, Bhatha.
20. Maulvi Nawab Miliar S/o Fateh Ali of Bewal.
21. Mohd Amin, Timber Merchant of Golian.
22. Havaladar Fazal Hussain S/o Karam Illahi, Tailor of Bewal.
23. Havaladar Mohd Iqbal of Civic Guard, Bewal.
24. Gulzar of Maira Shamas.
25. Master Abdul Ghani S/o Bhadur Chhachhi of Dheri.
26. Master Akbar Hussain of Dhera Kanial.

Besides these leaders I know the persons shown on annexure to this report who were amongst the rioters and I can recognize many others whose names I do not remember.

Simultaneously with the looting and burning the rioters began to murder Sikhs and Hindus also.

The first person who was murdered was Dalip Singh S/o Sunder Singh who was done to death by a sword blow by ... S/o Subedar Mutwali of village Dhera Kalia, Bakshi Balmukand Grandson Kuldeep and Bram Dass were murdered by Talib Sheru S/o Mangu Hav; with the aid of others. Lochan Singh, who was at the roof of his brother's house, was killed by Banka with a sword blow. Banka belongs to village Bewal. Mst Rukman Devi widow of Jem. Kishore Lall, Ishar Devi widow of Bk: Kilyan Dass, Bana Devi daughter of Bk: Ganpat Rai had lot of ornaments, jewellery and cash on their persons and took shelter in the house of ...Rahman Ali who robbed them. He along with Nawab Khan S/o Fateh Ali of Bewal, Jhan Dad S/o Shariff Din and Alla Ditta Lambardar of... and his brother Mohd Khan murdered them. Through their dead body in the burning house of Sohan Singh S/o Ram Singh, Bk. Girdhari Lal S/o Bk. Thakur Dass Bk: Dina Nath S/o Prem Chand Bk: Ganpat Rai S/o Bk: Hari Chand and Bk. Mohan Lal S/o Sain Dass witnessed and have narrated the incident to me. On that day the rioters looted and burnt those houses in the villages which were outside the firing range of those who had guns in the houses of S. Gokal Singh.

Ganda Singh S/o S. Lehna Singh was murdered in the top of his roof by Lal Khan Hav; Ghomar, Karima Malyar, Pahlwan and his brother Rostam S/o Dali with the aid of Jem: Mustafa of Dhera Kanian. This was witnessed by Trilochan Singh S/o Hoshiar Singh also.

On 11 March 1947, at about 9 a.m. Gulzar of Mehra Shamash, Khadan Hussain Ziladar, Banka Gnaga of Bewal and Zaffar Ali retired Sub Inspector shouted to the Sikhs and Hindus besieged in the house of S. Gokul Singh and said 'If you surrender arms and embrace Islam we shall spare your lives'. At this about 60 to 70 men, women and children came down. A list of those who came down is given as an annexure by 150/200 rioters and then taken to Juma Mosque in Bewal. From Juma Mosque we were taken to the house of Fazal Karim Barbar. Under threat of immediate death our Keshas and beard were cut by Fazal Karim barbar. From

the house of the barber we were taken to the house of Mohd Alam Teli. From Mohd Alam Teli house, taking advantage of the darkness we went to Gurha Dakhali Rafial in the house of Mansabdar and Shahbaz who gave us shelter for the night between 11th and 12th March, 1947. From that place we went to Sohwa Mirzian and remained there in the house of Said Mohd Shah for 8-9 days and Military rescued us from there. While we were in Juma Mosque I saw Mohinder Kaur daughter of Girdit Singh, Amrit Kaur daughter of Ishar Singh, Basant Kaur, daughter of Raja Ram and Her Kaur, d/o Bishan Singh, all grown up girls being taken away by Abdul Wahid S/o Sh Mohd Shafi and Ditta Khan S/o Fazal Ghumar village Dhere. Kanian said Kala Shah and Pahlwan Khan were also with them.

The following facts have been narrated by those persons who are alive and were left behind in the house of S. Gokul Singh.

At about 12 noon on 11th March, 1947, a hand grenade was thrown by Gulzar of Mahra Shamas on the house of S. Gokul Singh. About 15 Sikhs were killed and wounded as a result of this explosion of grenade. Dr Awtar Singh, Ishar Singh, Ujjagor Singh, Awtar Singh, S/o Amar Singh, S. Basant Singh and Lochan Singh, S/o Jodh Singh, Wishwa Nath S/o Bhagat Ram and Didar Singh, S/o Bk. Nihal Singh and others. Jom: Mustafa and Zaffar Ali retired Sub-Inspector set fire to the house of S. Gokul Singh. After this all the men, women, and children in the house of S. Gokul Singh were evacuated to the Gurdwara Singh Sabha through brigades of planks. It was about 12 noon. The rioters besieged the Gurdwara and started firing at the Sikhs and Hindus besieged in the Gurdwara. Karam Ali of Ratala fired a shot from a gun which struck S. Gokul Singh in the chest and he fell down dead. Jaffar Ali shot down dead Chot Singh. Khadam Hussain Sarbrahb Zaildar shot down S. Mohinder Singh. Similarly many others were shot down by the rioters.

At about 4 p.m. on 11.30 p.p. on 11-3-47 a sten gun was fired by Ghulzar Khan of Maira Shamash from the roof of Gurmukh Singh DAC, MA, a result of firing of the gun, 25/30 Sikhs were shot down including Sohan Singh, S/o Ram Singh, Awtar Singh, S/o Mehar Singh, Makhan Singh and Gurbux Singh, S/o Hara Singh, and others. The firing went on till 4 a.m. on 12-3-47. At about 4 a.m. the rioters succeeding in making a big hole on the west side of the Gurdwara wall about 50 rioters including Banka Gangal S/o Fazala Subha Saddiq Inam Kher of Mohra Bhatian Sh Abdul Wahid, Sh Mohd Shafi Sh Mohd Hussain of Dhera sawar Namaldar of Mankra, Akber S/o Subedar Mutwali, Mohd Anwar S/o Sub Muwali, Sarwar.

S/o Kariwa Malyar, Choudari Naram Dad Mamardar of Mohra Dhamial and Ch Miran Dad of Samot, and others entered Gurdwara and started general massacre of inmates. Names of some persons who were murdered are as under:

L. Roop Lall, L. Raghunath Rai, Mush. Bassi w/o Roop Lall, Krishna Devi w/o Roop Singh, Ram Kaur, w/o Harnam Singh, T.T.E. Maya Devi, w/o Dina Nath, ram Ditti w/o Bhagat Ram, Sarinder Singh and Dalip Singha sons of S. Harnam Singh, T.T.E. Bhagwanti, w/o Lall Chand, Harkirat Singh, S/o Didar Singh, Narinder Singh, S/o S. Gokul Singh, Harnam Kaur w/o S. Gian Singh, Jaswant Singh S/o Bhagat Singh.

Some 200 to 300 persons were killed in that Gurdwara. Following is the list of those persons who have been either murdered or are missing and are believed to have been murdered.

This village had a population of about 500 Hindus and Sikhs out of which only 76 have been accounted for and out of the rest, some 361 have been done to death and the remaining are missing and are believed to have been murdered. There were about 150 houses and 60 shops belonging to Hindus and Sikhs. All excepting one home belonging to Sukha Singh (who has been forcibly converted to Islam) have been looted and burnt.

Bewal was a proper village and a centre of trade in the lakhs property—movable and immovable worth 80–90 lakhs of rupees belonging to Sikhs and Hindus has been whither looted or destroyed. A list of some of those persons who are still alive is given below and these persons will support the facts stated below:

ESCAPED:

1. Jamit Singh, S/o Gulab Singh
2. Tarlochan Singh, S/o Hoshair Singh
3. Sardar Singh Chadda, S/o Bhai Narain Singh
4. Bhagwat Singh, S/o Arjan Singh
5. Hardit Singh, S/o Bhagwat Singh
6. Kulwant Singh, S/o Munshi Beant Singh
7. Satpal Singh, S/o Mukand Singh
8. Pritpal Singh, S/o Mukand Singh

CONVERTED AND REACHED REFUGEE CAMP BY NOW:

1. Bhai Santosh Singh Granthi.
2. L. Mohan Lall.
3. Ganpat Rai.
4. Tilak Raj (Nephew of Ram Ditta).
5. Raj Rani (Niece of Ram Ditta).
6. Dalip Singh S/o Chet Singh.
7. Jodh Singh.
8. Parmeshwari.
9. Amar Kaur.
10. Sowaran Kaur.
11. Ram Kaur.
12. Vir Kaur.
13. Sarinder Singh.
14. Tejender Singh, S/o Jit Singh.
15. Jaswant Kaur. D/o Jit Singh.
16. Rani.
17. Bhagat Singh.
18. Dayal Singh.
19. Balwant Singh.
20. Amrit Kaur.
21. Boti Singh.
22. Wants.
23. Diwan Singh.
24. Mathre.
25. Inder Singh.
26. Ishar Singh.
27. Harbhajan Singh.
28. Harnam Singh.
29. Gurcharan Singh.

CONVERTED AND STILL WITH MOHAMMEDANS:

1. Balwant Singh.
2. Dewan Devi.
3. Son.
4. Son.
5. Son.
6. Daughter of Gian Singh.
7. Daugher.
8. Diwan Chand.
9. Inder Kaur.
10. Daughter.
11. Hari Singh.
12. Mool Singh.
13. Raj Rani.
14. Son.
15. Son.
16. Son.
17. Daughter.
18. Daughter.
19. Amar Kaur.
20. Son.
21. Son.
22. Pooni.
23. Daughter.
24. Daughter.
25. Sukha Singh.
26. Ram Dai.
27. Khatri.
28. Tarlok Singh.
29. Dharam Singh.
30. Harottam Singh.
31. Harbans Kaur.
32. Daughter.
33. Daughter.

TAKEN AWAY FORCIBLY AND STILL BELIEVED TO BE ALIVE WITH MOHAMMEDANS:

1. Amrit Kaur, D/o Ishar Singh.
2. Har Kaur, D/o Bishan Singh.
3. Pran Kaur, D/o Raja Ram.
4. Mohinder Kaur, D/o Gurdit Singh.

Yours most obedient servant.



10. 'Murree and Taxila Burnt Down—Amritsar Fire Cause Huge Havoc'
The Tribune, 10 March 1947.

Lahore, 9 March.—Judging from all outward appearances, the communal situation in Lahore was heartening.

Disquieting reports, however, have come from the northwest part of the Province. It is stated that Taxila, the ancient seat of learning, has been completely gutted. The Murree hill station and Ghora Gali are still ablaze.

His Excellency Sir Evan Jenkins, Governor of the Punjab, accompanied by the Inspector-General Police, Sir John Bennett flew to Rawalpindi today to see things for himself. Sir Evan returned to Lahore at about 2 p.m.

In Rawalpindi area troops have been ordered to shoot at sight on the slightest disobedience of orders.

The investiture, which was to have been held in Government House, Lahore on 15 March, has been postponed to a date which will be announced later.

In Lahore itself there was greater activity and more people were seen going about on the roads and in the streets. There was increased traffic—and all this infused confidence in the hearts of the people....

The District Magistrate, Mr Eustace, passed a couple of fresh orders today, in order to be able to control the situation more strongly. By one of these orders, the District Magistrate has banned the raising of any false alarms and shouting of slogans as also the beating of drums and the ringing of bells.

This order, it is expected, will be strictly enforced and the authorities are determined to take strong action against any one infringing it. It will remain in force for 8 days from today. By another order, the District Magistrate relaxed restrictions in certain areas in the Civil Lines where the Curfew Order will remain in force from 12 midnight to 7 a.m.

There were three cases of stabbing in Lahore today of which one is stated to have proved fatal....

The Punjab Riot Sufferers Relief Fund has been initiated by the Council of Action and an appeal has been made by about fifty leading Hindu and Sikh leaders, asking for donations for the purpose of affording relief to those who have suffered in the riots....

Peace Committees Being Formed

Peace Committee are being formed in various localities of the City, where well-meaning people of all communities are anxious to maintain peace and establish cordial relations between the various communities living in the mohallas and the suburbs of Lahore....

Corporation Councillors Active

The Councillors of the Lahore Corporation, who held a meeting today at the Town Hall, with Mian Amir-ud-Din in the chair, decided to issue an appeal to the leaders of all parties and communities to devise immediately effective ways and means for the promotion of communal harmony and peace in the province.

The meeting adopted a resolution, condemning the acts of violence, arson, and looting perpetrated during the last two days and making an appeal to the citizens of Lahore to refrain from all such reprehensible acts and try to cultivate communal peace and goodwill. Deep sympathy with riot victims was also expressed by the Councillors.

Rescue and Relief Work

The Lahore District Congress Committee is conducting rescue and relief work, with the aid of other organizations. At a meeting of the Working Committee of the District Congress Committee and office-bearers of the Ward Congress Committees, it was decided to ask the Congress Corporation Councillors and the ward Congress office-bearers to patrol the various Hindu and Muslim localities and ask the people to re-establish good relations. The District Congress Committee has been able to rescue a large number of people of various communities from the affected areas or areas which were considered to be insecure.

The relief camp opened by the District Congress Committee has been doing good work. The police wanted the camp to be removed for reasons best known to them. It is stated that when the Congress workers refused to remove the camp someone had the audacity to water the plot....

Agha Shorish Kashmiri, General Secretary of the All-India Majlis-i-Ahrar has appealed to the people of the Punjab to remain calm and quiet and exercise restraint. The Red Shirt volunteers of the Majlis-i-Ahrar have rescued a large number of people from disturbed areas and given them shelter in the Ahrar Office. They have also conducted a very large number of passengers from the Railway Station to their homes.

The Hindustan Scouts and the Punjab Patel Sewa Samiti Sutarmandi, are doing social work in helping people and looking after the injured. The Muslim League National Guards are working in Muslim Localities and doing relief work. League leaders visited Muslim localities.

Sardar Swarn Singh and Mr Singha Visit Hospital

Sardar Swarn Singh, Leader of the Panthic Party in the Punjab Assembly and former Minister for Development visited a large part of the city today. He impressed on the inhabitants to maintain peace and tranquility.

Earlier Sardar Swarn Singh accompanied by Diwan Bahadur S.P. Singha, Speaker of the Punjab Assembly, paid a visit to Mayo Hospital where they spent about an hour and enquired after the condition of injured persons belonging to all communities.

Diwan Bahadur Singha also visited the affected areas in the city along with Mr C.E. Gibbon and Mr Brij Lal and exhorted the people to maintain peace....

11. 'Gandhiji Deplores Punjab Riots'

The Tribune, 10 March 1947.

Patna, 9 March.—In his post-prayer speech last evening, Mahatma Gandhi referred to the Punjab disturbances and stated that those who acted in such manners in any part of the country did not serve either their religion or their country. They simply helped to retard the cause of independence through their own fault. In the Punjab, these disturbances had only served to re-establish Section 93 Government.

Mahatma Gandhi called upon Hindus of Bihar to come forward with liberal contribution for the relief of Muslim sufferers as an earnest of their goodwill towards Muslims.

This, said Mahatma Gandhi, would also be a form of 'Prayaschitta' (atonement) for them. He did not ask for such contributions in Noakhali because he got about three lakhs of rupees, without asking, from different quarters. He wanted only the Hindus of Bihar to contribute to

this fund and asked them to be more generous in the matter than the Harijan Fund, for which he received sufficient contributions from all over India.

Some collections for the Bihar Muslim Sufferers Fund (opened by Mahatma Gandhi) were made after Gandhiji's departure from the meeting.—API.

12. Governor's Discussion with League Leaders

Note by Evan Jenkins of His Interview with Mamdot, Daultana, and Noon, 10 March 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 239–41.

Khan Iftikhar Husain Khan of Mamdot, Mian Mumtaz Muhammad Khan Daultana and Malik Firoz Khan Noon called on me at 3.15 p.m. today at their request.

2. I had just returned from Multan and gave them an account of what was going on there and at Rawalpindi which I visited yesterday. They seemed satisfied at the measures we were taking. I rubbed into them that in Multan and Rawalpindi the Muslims were undoubtedly the aggressors and that retaliation for outrages in the villages was now a very real danger. They admitted that this was so.

3. Daultana then said that they wished to explain the origin and failure of the Peace Committee. Mamdot had suggested this, and at first it appeared that the other communities would co-operate. Unfortunately Master Tara Singh never turned up and Giani Kartar Singh attended only one meeting. When the Committee was formed, it had been made clear to Sardar Swaran Singh and Lala Bhim Sen Sachar that the Muslim League were prepared to negotiate with the Congress and the Sikhs both on short-term and on long-term issues. This offer had had a very poor response. I said that the suggestion for a common statement by the leaders of all communities had actually come from Sardar Swaran Singh, and I knew that originally he was keen about the Peace Committee. I did not know what had led to the sudden change in Congress and Sikh views; but the resolution of the Congress Working Committee and the simultaneous statement by Congress and Sikh leaders in the Punjab, which were issued yesterday, seemed to indicate that the Congress were acting under instructions from their High Command and had carried the Sikhs with them. I thought I knew where Master Tara Singh was; he was certainly keeping out of the public eye; and I fancied he had had a hard time from some of his followers who thought his statements immediately before the communal rioting had been ill-timed.

4. The deputation then made it clear that they still wanted to get into touch with the Sikhs. They asked for my help and we had a long discussion on the best method of proceeding. I enquired whether they had the authority of their High Command to negotiate freely; it was evident that they had not obtained such authority, but they thought they could obtain it. I pointed out some of the difficulties in negotiations at the present moment. The Sikhs were very sore at what they regarded as a Muslim attack on them. (I said that in Rawalpindi and Lahore I thought the Sikhs had had much the worst of it; in Multan the casualties were mainly Hindus; in Amritsar the casualties were mainly Muslims.) Moreover, the Congress and Sikh leaders had committed themselves publicly to a partition of the Punjab, and Punjab Congressmen were chained to their High Command. Unless the Muslim League could explain what Pakistan meant they would not get very far. I was quite prepared to see S. Swaran Singh, but I thought it desirable for me to see L. Bhim Sen Sachar also, since I thought the Sikhs might now be so committed to the Congress that they could not move without them. If I could persuade S. Swaran Singh

and L. Bhim Sen Sachar to participate in negotiations, the best plan might be for me to invite two leaders from each community to meet me at Government House. We could explore the possibilities in a general way, and if the communities—or at least the Muslims and Sikhs—were ready to come to terms, they could then take over direct negotiations. I did not think it right that I should be concerned with the details, which were for the leaders themselves to settle. The deputation did not seem very clear about their position with their own High Command, but they agreed to this procedure. I said that my interviews with S. Swaran Singh and L. Bhim Sen Sachar would be entirely without commitment and that any subsequent meeting at which I presided would also be without commitment. In fact I was prepared to mediate if I could, but I should have to start informally and try to work up to a position in which the parties would talk to one another direct without my intervention.

5. Malik Firoz Khan Noon said there was one matter of a somewhat delicate nature that he wished to bring to my notice. There was a movement among the Congress and Sikh leaders to revive the Coalition Ministry with a very small number of Muslims. They had failed to secure the former Premier, but were believed to have secured Nawab Sir Muzaffar Ali Khan Qizilbash and Mian Muhammad Ibrahim Barq. The latter was said to cherish ambitions of the Premiership in a new Coalition. I could well imagine that the formation of a Government of this sort would cause the greatest resentment among Muslims. I said I appreciated the point, but, as far as I was aware, there would be little cohesion among the Muslim Unionists if the former Premier did not lead them.

6. There was no suggestion that a Muslim League Government should be formed, and from something said by Malik Firoz Khan Noon I think it is most improbable that they are anywhere near securing even a technical majority in the Assembly.

7. In the course of our conversation the deputation expressed great apprehension about the attitude of the Sikhs. They said they had heard that trouble was imminent at Ludhiana and Kartarpur. They also said that there were large stocks of arms in the Gurdwaras, and that they would be quite prepared to agree to Mosques being searched if we would search Gurdwaras as well. I made no comment on this latter suggestion except to say that I believed it to be true that the Sikhs had accumulated some arms during the War. I said that I had heard nothing about trouble being expected at Ludhiana and Kartarpur. Stories about the collection of fighting Sikhs in the Darbar Sahib at Amritsar and Sikh attacks on Tarn Taran and Jullundur had so far proved quite untrue.

8. Will G.S please pass on to IG Police the Muslim League apprehensions about Ludhiana and Kartarpur?

E.M.J.



13. Communal Mobilization in Punjab

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Wavell Forwarding a Report by Dewan Chaman Lal, 11 March 1947
IOR, R/3/1/89, Acc. No. 3414, NAI.

New Delhi,

Dear Lord Wavell,

My colleague, Dewan Chaman Lal, a member of the Central Assembly from the Punjab, has just returned from a visit to Lahore. He has sent me a report of conditions and happenings there. As this might interest you, I am sending it to you.

Yours sincerely

Jawaharlal Nehru
His Excellency
Field Marshal Earl Wavell,
Viceroy's House,

New Delhi.

I returned from Lahore late last night. During my three days stay in Lahore I had prolonged discussions with leaders of all communities and received reports from most of the affected areas. I visited various parts of the city and attended meetings of the Peace Committee. Individuals from other affected areas in the Punjab excepting Amritsar and Multan brought news from their respective centres. I arrived at the final conclusion, after cross-examining many eye-witnesses and sifting the evidence contained in many reports received by me that

- (a) There were definite signs of a pre-arranged plan of action in the North-Western areas of the Punjab;
- (b) The unwise and precipitate action on the part of the police in Lahore in attacking a procession of students in Anarkali, making a lathi charge on them and in resorting to indiscriminate firing almost immediately thereafter on students assembled in a meeting at Golbagh, Lahore had the cumulative effect of on the one hand creating bitterness and resentment among the Hindus and Sikhs, and on the other encouraging all those of the other community who were spoiling for a fight who got the impression that the authorities at last were on their side.

2. During the 34 days agitation engineered by the Muslim League not a shot was fired at the students. The procedure adopted was that the first line of offence was a Tear-Gas squad; the second line, police armed with lathis and the third and final, armed police... to open fire into the crowd, but this last action was not resorted to nor generally were lathis employed. But on the morning of the 4th of March at about 9.40 a.m. three batches of students headed by the leaders of the Punjab Students' Federation and the Indian Students' Federation entered Anarkali and were beaten up by the police according to statements made to me by eye-witnesses. A newspaper correspondent Mr P.C. Batra stated that he had never seen any League procession of a students during the previous agitation, lathi-charged by the police, but on this occasion not only was a lathi charge resorted to but that a police official opened fire. The students proceeded to Govt College and a free fight took place between them and the police. Not far away a meeting was being held of students of various Hindu and Sikh colleges;

and it is stated that armed police, about 60 in number, rushed to this meeting in Golbagh and attacked it, first with lathis and very soon thereafter opened fire on the crowd. The firing was indiscriminate, killing people far away from the scene including a litigant in the Civil Court named Karamchand, and a student in the DAV College Hostel standing by the window of his room, who it is stated was deliberately shot.

3. This was the origin of the trouble which spread throughout the city. An impression was created that the Muslim police definitely taking sides....

4. Meanwhile extremely well-organized bands of the Muslim League National Guards took charge of the situation. Two of our Ministers, Mr Swarn Singh and Mr Lahore Singh, informed me that they had a talk with the Governor who admitted that he had received information that the Muslim League National Guards had been round in police uniforms and were armed, but that it was not known how they came by these uniforms.

5. A general sense of insecurity and despair created in the minds of Hindus and Sikhs in Lahore due to the knowledge of these facts and due to what they considered to be partisan action taken by the police has led to a demand that a military should be given charge of the situation. I was told that the Governor had asked for the assistance of 3 companies, and that when public men approached him he stated that enough troops were not available. The Brigadier, however, then approached and declared that he had eleven more companies available on the spot and that he had been asked for only three.

The necessity for the employment of troops is to me borne out by the fact that when the citizens of Lahore Cantonment asked the military authorities to take charge, the effect was instantaneous. A great deal of murder and arson which otherwise might have been indulged in, was avoided, and generally, as compared with the city, the situation in the Cantonment was under control....

7. I give extracts from a memorandum submitted to me by well-known Sikhs and Hindus in Lahore:

- (a) 'Two non-Muslims were shot dead by the police when they were purchasing their rations at a shop and that too without a warning. Afterwards the police attribute this to a mistake.'
- (b) 'Where Muslim mobs entered non-Muslim areas and started looting and setting fire, police connived at it.'
- (c) 'When forced to fire on a Muslim mob, the police either fired in the air or on the ground.'
- (d) 'When even non-Muslim have been killed, they take up the absurd plea that non-Muslim killed non-Muslims to give a bad name to Muslims.'
- (e) 'So long as the predominantly Muslim-police is in control, there are no chances of restoring confidence among the masses, especially non-Muslims.'
- (f) 'The Governor is not making full use of the military. A large number of companies are available, but only three have been called. If the military had been called in everything would have been quiet in the Punjab by now.'
- (g) 'In spite of clear complaints against Muslim aggressors no action is being taken by the I.G. of Police or other police officers....'

Whatever the truth a sense of utter insecurity and lack of confidence in the police is evident and not only have the Muslim National Guards been found in police uniforms but empty cartridges have been found marked 'Specially prepared for HH the Nawab of Bhawalpur. Made in England'.

9. I was shown hand bills with pictorial representations giving instructions how to stab and kill efficiently, ending up with verses from the Quran Shareef. Definite and reliable information received was to the effect that charts have been prepared indicating various sites to be attacked in regular organized military fashion, and men designated to take charge of a systematized campaign of stabbing. The answer is complete military control and a ruthless rounding up of those who are behind these organized campaigns.

10. What the public in the Punjab is unable to understand is that with the political situation that had arisen in Lahore, immediate precautionary steps were not taken by the authorities in Amritsar, Multan and Rawalpindi; for it was known both to the citizens and presumably to the authorities that crowds had been collecting outside Pindi city. We are unable to understand why these crowds were not dispersed and action taken against them....

11. I attended meeting of the so-called Peace Committee. The Muslim League representatives were present including Mr Mumtaz Daultana, Mr Feroz Khan Noon, Mr Shaukat Hayat Khan and others. It was suggested that the leaders should go round the city, but that they would do so only if Master Tara Singh accompanied them. I wrote to Master Tara Singh, but as no one was allowed to enter or leave Amritsar my letter was sent through official channels....

After very careful examination, the position as I see it is that the Muslim League Assembly Party in the Punjab cannot claim the support of a majority in the Assembly. Mr Feroze Khan Noon admitted the fact that they could not form a ministry and that even if they were called upon to do so they would be defeated the very first day. In this situation the resolution of the Congress Working Committee was released suggesting a partition of the Punjab. This resolution has had a tremendous reassuring effect on the general political situation in the Punjab, as far as the Hindus and Sikhs are concerned, and steps to implement it would so a long way in bringing breath of reality into the present abnormal situation.

12. The situation would certainly have not arisen had the Ministry continued in office. At any rate it would not have assured its present serious aspect. Both Ministers, Mr Swarn Singh and Mr Lahiri Singh informed me that they had been told by Malik Khizar Hayat Khan that the Governor had tried for some time to persuade him to join up with the League in order to form a more stable ministry, suggesting that after the position had been stabilized, if he so chose he could retire. It seemed to the Ministers and to all those who knew this fact that rather than join the Muslim League, Malik Khizar Hayat Khan would prefer to tender his resignation. I am aware that some British Press Correspondents were informed by the Governor that he had tried to induce Malik Khizar Hayat Khan to stick on to his job. But the then Ministers were definite in regard to the pressure to put upon Khizar Hayat Khan.

13. It is quite obvious that Section 93 administration will have to continue for some time but it must be reinforced by the military. There is no prospect whatsoever either of a Muslim League Ministry coming into power by itself or of a coalition. I consulted all the non-Muslim Leaders and they unanimously of the opinion that they would not lend their support to the Muslim League Party....

14. ...Since the key positions in the Punjab are today by important British officials I think it is about time that this matter should be looked into... where the failure has occurred in order that the future may be secured. I am afraid of repercussion in South-Eastern Punjab. As to where the riot fever will break out is as unpredictable as the happening of an earthquake, but it is obvious that both the North-West and the South-East are, terrible danger points....

I have referred to the responsibility of officials. One example will suffice. Some of the communiqués issued by the Punjab Govt during the first three days were dangerous in the

extreme, I might even say provocative. On the second day of the occurrences a communiqué was issued by the Govt that a Muslim while offering Namaz in a mosque in Krishna Nagar was stabbed by a Hindu. No such incident occurred. As a matter of fact there is no mosque in Krishna Nagar. When the official in charge was asked about this false communiqué his reply was that this was information conveyed to him, which apparently, he had not taken the trouble to verify. No doubt when enquiries are not going such facts will be elicited, establishing the responsibility for the happenings not only of those who were expected to ask for trouble but of those also who became accessories and provocateurs.

Chaman Lal

Letter below from Pandit Nehru. The note by Dewan Chaman Lal is not an impressive document. He has believed all the stories he has been told, and some of them are manifestly false. It is natural that there should be a feeling among the non-Muslim population in Lahore that they will get less than a square deal from the Punjab police because the rank and file of the Punjab police are predominantly Muslim. From all accounts, however, the police have done extraordinarily well, and Hinds and Sikhs of Lahore may well be thankful for the protection they have received....

2. ...I think, however, that there should be a denial at once of the entirely false story in paragraph 12 that the Governor brought pressure to bear on Malik Khizar Hayat Khan to join the League and form a more stable ministry...

(G.E.B. Abell)

11-3-1947

14. Sikh Leaders' Refusal to Negotiate with Muslim League

Note by Evan Jenkins on His Interviews with Baldev Singh and Swaran Singh, 11 March 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 241-2.

I had a very long talk this afternoon with Sardar Baldev Singh. We began at about 5.00 p.m. and Sardar Swaran Singh joined us shortly after 6.00 p.m. We did not finish until nearly 7.30 p.m.

2. Our conversation ranged over the whole of the present situation. The Sikhs are intensely aggrieved and are not really in a mood to enter into negotiations with the Muslim League. In the end Sardar Baldev Singh and Sardar Swaran Singh agreed that if the Muslim League leaders would (a) take open steps to stop Muslim outrages in Rawalpindi, Attock and Multan districts, and (b) obtain authority from their High Command to negotiate as Punjabis with the minorities, the Sikhs would be prepared to attend a meeting convened by me. This meeting should consist of the three Parliamentary leaders, Mamdot, Sardar Swaran Singh and L. Bhim Sen Sachar, the option being allowed to each of these leaders to bring one associate with him. I undertook to contact Mamdot and to try to arrange a meeting for tomorrow evening.

3. There is little doubt that the mind of the Sikhs is running on reprisals and that the Muslims have little chance of maintaining a united Punjab. The Sikhs will demand at best a deferred partition, and at worst an immediate partition, of the Province. They were not clear about the boundary but it is clear that they will demand a good deal more than the Muslims have ever expected to concede.

4. Sardar Swaran Singh produced a cyclostyled questionnaire and a writing pad alleged to have been found by R.B. Badri Dass in the High Court. The questionnaire invites Muslims to give information to an unspecified authority on various subjects which indicate revolutionary intentions. The writing pad contains what purports to be notes on a revolutionary organization. DIG/CID took these documents over.

5. After our conversation I asked DIG/CID to contact Mamdot tonight and to make an appointment for him to see me at 10.30 a.m. tomorrow. I told DIG/CID to explain to Mamdot the conditions on which the Sikhs would be prepared to negotiate.

E.M.J

15. Nehru to Visit Punjab

Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Wavell, 13 March 1947
IOR, R/3/1/89, Acc. No. 3414, NAI.

Dear Lord Wavell,

As you know, events in the Punjab and in the Frontier Province have been distressing us very greatly. Conditions there do not seem to be improving. Last night I had a telephone conversation with Sardar Baldev Singh who was in Lahore and the account he gave me of what was happening round about Rawalpindi was terrible. Evidently press and other reports do not give all the facts....

I have avoided visiting the Punjab, as I did not wish to interfere in any way, but I feel now that I must go there. I receive moving appeals from friends in the Punjab and yesterday Sardar Baldev Singh also suggested how very desirable it was for me to go there. I have, therefore, decided to pay a brief visit to the Punjab to meet people there informally and to see things for myself. I intend going there tomorrow (Friday) afternoon by air. I shall go to Lahore first and subsequently I should like to go to Amritsar and Rawalpindi. If possible, I might pay a brief visit to Peshawar. I expect to be away for the weekend, returning on Monday.

It is difficult to leave my work and important engagement here at this time, but I feel that everything else should be put aside for the moment and I must give first priority to a visit to the Punjab.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

16. 'The Punjab Tragedy'

The Hindustan Times, 13 March 1947.

Since the resignation of the Khizr Ministry, the Punjab has been the scene of communal rioting reminiscent of Bengal and Bihar. In Amritsar, Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi, destruction of life and property has been heavy. Though disturbances have lasted ten days and the situation seems to be under control in the urban areas, the destructive movement is reported to be spreading in the rural parts of Western Punjab. If this is not checked it may provoke trouble in Eastern Punjab and the entire administration may break down leaving the province in the throes of a civil war.

There is no doubt that these disturbances are wholly political in character. We do not know whether those who were responsible for upsetting the Coalition Ministry expected this terrible sequel. But they cannot escape responsibility for it. If it is true that the Governor of the Punjab put pressure on Malik Khizr Hyat Khan to make way for the Muslim League, he should be aghast at the consequences of his action. As *The Times* says, 'the Punjab disorders are a terrible warning of the dangers to public order inseparable from any attempt to enforce communal dictatorship by unconstitutional agitation.' If the leaders of the Muslim League thought that they could seize power by force, they must have been disillusioned. One of the most reprehensible features of these disturbances is the open partisanship of officials. Our Special Correspondent has given typical instances of the way in which responsible police officials in Lahore participated in the rioting on 5 March. In many places, members of the Muslim National Guard are reported to have been found in police uniform and armed.

Though the first duty of the Section 93 administration in the Punjab is to restore order by firm police and military action, it is obvious that that will not be sufficient to put down the movement. Drastic political action is necessary if these disturbances are to be prevented from spreading all over the province. Unless popular Government can be restored in some form, the Punjab will have to pass under martial law. A purely communal ministry is out of the question. A coalition of all parties is practically ruled out by the Muslim League's insistence on Pakistan. We are, therefore, driven to the conclusion that the only way to restore peace, in the Punjab is to devise separate popular administrations for the Muslim and non-Muslim parts of the province. It need not involve any final decision on the issue of partition. There is also no need for any parliamentary or other legislation. The terms of Section 93 are broad enough to cover this case. It is provided that a proclamation under Section 93 'may contain such incidental and consequential provisions as may appear to the Governor to be necessary or desirable for giving effect to the objects of the proclamation, including provision for suspending in whole or in part the operation of any provisions of this Act relating to any provincial body of authority.' It is open to the Governor to constitute two sets of ministers for the two parts of the province and reorganize the police and administrative staff in such manner as to ensure popular support to the Government. Even without Section 93, it is possible to adopt some such arrangement by convention if all the political parties of the province agree to it. There seems no escape from the fact that the Punjab as a single political and administrative unit cannot survive and that partition will have to be recognized de facto. It will make for peace on both sides of the line of demarcation, while enabling the Nawab of Mamdot to form unencumbered the Ministry he is hankering after and at the same time giving the Hindu-Sikh area the only administration it will tolerate under existing circumstances. When the League started the campaign to upset the Coalition Ministry, it deliberately courted the present developments. It put on the false mantle of democracy. *The Times* has rightly remarked: 'The danger is in no way lessened if the agitation claims to be based on democratic principles. It is a curious feature of the campaign conducted in the Punjab by the Muslim League that a 56 per cent Muslim majority in the province enables it to invoke those principles while it fiercely controverts them in other parts of India. No Muslim party can form a ministry unless it secures Sikh or Hindu support.' Such support can be secured only by abandoning the demand for Pakistan.



17. Communal Atmosphere in Punjab

Letter from Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 14 March 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 80–1.

Secret

Government House, Lahore, No. 655

Dear Lord Wavell.

This is my letter for the first half of March. I have reported very fully on the communal disturbances and discussed them with Your Excellency at New Delhi yesterday. I need therefore say little more about them now.

2. There is no immediate prospect of a new Ministry and I may have to remain in Section 93 for some weeks....

3....I have been much concerned since I took over as Governor at the increasing inefficiency of the Central Services. The telephone service is not only inefficient, but disloyal. Telephone calls are regularly tapped and the substance of conversations is passed on to the political parties, particularly the Muslim League. It is unfortunate that the politicians are destroying the services on which they will depend when they take over.

4. I have arranged for Nehru to be met here and at Rawalpindi and Multan by the Commissioners concerned. We are all rather apprehensive about his visit; but P.N. Thapar (whom you know), the present Commissioner of Lahore, will probably be able to cope with him. Nehru never seems to hear more than one side of any question, and Chaman Lal, who appears to be his adviser on Punjab affairs, is both mischievous and untruthful. Like most Congressmen, Nehru is at heart intensely communal, and if he loses his head, he may also lose us some of the ground we have won back so hardly during the last week.

5. The news from the Rawalpindi and Attock districts is still very bad, and I hope to submit to Your Excellency today proposals for a very drastic amendment in the Criminal Law to enable the police and troops to deal with the situation. Multan is also bad, but the country is easier and yesterday or the day before a small party of Indian troops, who had been surrounded by a riotous mob and were obliged to open fire seriously, did considerable execution. This should have a good effect.

Yours sincerely,

E.M. JENKINS

18. 'How Dr Kitchlew Escaped Death'

The Tribune, 14 March 1947.

Lahore, 12 March.—**The veteran Punjab Congress leader, Dr S.D. Kitchlew, President Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, it is now learnt, socially escaped from the laws of death. The circumstances under which he was placed could have proved tragic. God be thanked, however, that it did not happen so.**

Dr Kitchlew was today brought by Sardar Baldev Singh, Defence Member, and Government of India from Multan and taken to Amritsar.

The tragic story of the death of his host, who was murdered and whose house was set on fire at Multan, was narrated by Dr Kitchlew himself to the 'Tribune' at the aerodrome at Multan before he flew with India's Defence Member and others. Dr Kitchlew had received injuries all

over the body, these having been caused by lathi blows and stones which were hurled upon him but the most severe injury was the one which he received on his hand by the result of lathi blow which was hurled upon him by the rioters on three occasions.

Describing the events leading to the death of his host, Seth Kalyan Dass, Dr Kitchew said that his host drove him back from the courts where he had gone on a professional visit and before the two reached back the palatial bungalow of Seth Kalyan Dass, fire had been set to an adjoining house and even though Seth Kalyan Dass suggested to Dr Kitchew to go back leaving the host to his fate. Dr Kitchew did not agree and insisted upon going into the bungalow, they were told by the son of his host (who is lying injured in the hospital) that some people were trying to break upon into their house from the back. Seth Kalyan Dass, who had been very friendly with the members of all communities, particularly the Muslims, thought that he would be able to persuade the rioters to go back and create no trouble. Leaving Dr Kitchew in his room, Seth Kalyan Dass went up to the rioters never to return again. The distinguished guest kept waiting for the host who could never come back and while he shouted for him he got no reply from either the host Seth Kalyan Dass or his son. Dr Kitchew came out of the room and as he did so he was face to face with two or three 'goondas' who attacked him at once and hurled two blows on him. One of them asked the name and when he was told that he was Dr Saif-ud-Din, he was spared.

Before, however, Dr Kitchew could come out of the house, some other goondas appeared on the scene and were about to make a murderous assault on him. But he was spared again after his name had been ascertained. The rioters asserted themselves by every possible means.

While he was going out he was helped by some other well-meaning Muslim gentlemen, who conducted him to their own house. But before these gentlemen could help Dr Kitchew to go back to the railway station (because he was to have left the same night) some persons in the locality insisted upon Dr Kitchew becoming a member of the Muslim League and asked him to sign a pledge. This Dr Kitchew refused to do and said that he could not possibly agree to change his own convictions.

The group of Muslims who had rescued him safely from the clutches of the goondas earlier helped Dr Kitchew to get back to the railway station. Even though Dr Kitchew and those who protected him were stoned on their way, he reached the railway station. Here a good police officer persuaded Dr Kitchew not to proceed by train and kept him back for a day. Dr Kitchew was then removed to the military hospital from where after having received all attention and good treatment he was discharged today and taken to Amritsar. Excepting for the rather bad injury in his right hand Dr Kitchew otherwise is keeping very good spirit.

19. Nehru Demands Martial Law

Note by Evan Jenkins about His Interview with Jawaharlal Nehru, 14 March 1947
Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 245-7.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru spent rather over an hour with me this evening from 7 o'clock.

2. We talked first about the immediate situation. He said that since he arrived in Lahore at 4 p.m. he had done nothing but see a large number of people. He felt that the solution to our immediate problem in seriously disturbed areas, such as Rawalpindi, was to hand over to the Military Commanders. Rightly or wrongly the communities had lost confidence in the services—the non-Muslims suspected Muslim officials and *vice-versa*. I explained the difficulties

about Martial Law and said that as I understood the position it could no longer be imposed by proclamation and Ordinance. It represented in fact a decision taken by a Military Commander on his own responsibility, usually because the civil administration had completely ceased to function or his operations or troops were endangered. The Military Commander acted in the exercise of a recognized power under the common law; he had no statutory backing and was answerable afterwards for his actions. Pt J.L. Nehru said that he was not well up in the legal technicalities, but the 'short point' was that the people should feel that really firm measures were being taken to suppress the agitation. I replied that in my opinion certain offences, such as attempted murder, kidnapping and its variants, robbery and dacoity and their variant, rape, and arson, should be made punishable with death. The principle of 'minimum force' should also be abrogated. I said that I had made these proposals to the Viceroy in the letter. I was dispatching today. Pt J.L. Nehru seemed to agree with these measures, and said that if we were to stop trouble in the central and east Punjab, the north and west must be pacified within a few days. In Bihar firm action by the Army had had an electric effect. I replied the troops were operating in large numbers in the disturbed areas and had been told to interpret the principle of 'minimum force' in a sensible way. Pt J.L. Nehru asked if it was possible to extend the restrictions on gatherings, the carrying of weapons, and other things to the rural areas. I replied that it was possible and that action had been taken to my knowledge in Rawalpindi and Multan. I was less sure about Attock. (G.S. might see that suitable orders issued to DC Attock and DC Jhelum. The point is that unless restrictions are in force in seriously disturbed areas, the police and troops cannot act automatically against gatherings which are in all probability unlawful. They have to ask what the people are doing, declare to be unlawful, and so on, which is an indefinite and unsatisfactory procedure.)

3. We then passed to a discussion of the long-term problem. Pt J.L. Nehru said that some sort of partition was inevitable, but it must be made within the framework of the present constitution and by methods which could be established by convention and not by legislation. He thought a Muslim Area, a Central Area and not a Non-Muslim Area should be recognized, and that Ministers should be so appointed that each area was for certain purposes autonomous. The Ministers of all three Areas should sit jointly for other purposes—that is to say for matters of common concern. I said that the same idea had occurred to me, namely, that we should avoid a physical partition, but adopt devices which would give confidence to all communities. The arrangement would be a cumbersome one and might lead to trouble in the Departments. For example, there would have to be at least two and possibly three separate sections of the Education Department, each working under its own Minister. I referred to the arrangements for Scotland, and Pt J.L. Nehru took this point up and said that the analogy was not at all a bad one. Bills affecting Scotland had to be passed in Parliament, but were first referred to a Grand Committee consisting of the Scottish Members, whose advice was by convention accepted.

4. Pandit J.L. Nehru ended our conversation by saying that if I were here on Sunday evening, he would like to see me again. I said that I would be very glad to see him.

5. During our conversation he put through a telephone call to Dr Khan Sahib at Peshawar and subsequently transmitted a message by G.S. to HE the Viceroy in reply to a message from the Viceroy which I handed to him.

E.M. JENKINS



20. Worsening Situation in Punjab: Patel For Martial Law

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Wavell, 15 March 1947

SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 11–12.

New Delhi

Dear Lord Wavell,

The situation in the Punjab has been a matter of grave concern and anxiety to me since the past few days and I have been considering how best we could bring it under control as soon as possible. Both private advice and official reports confirm that, while the authorities have been able, to some extent, to bring under control the communal disturbances in the cities, those in rural areas, particularly in the districts of Multan, Rawalpindi, Attock, Campbellpur and Mianwali are still defying the efforts of the civil power in collaboration with the military authorities. Instances of murder, forced conversions, abductions, and other things, are fairly common, while acts of arson and loot are being perpetrated with impunity on a very extensive scale. It is clear from the telegrams of the Governor of the Punjab that the position in rural areas has been deteriorating despite attempts to check it and that infiltration has started even from across the Indus.

2. As far as I can judge, these disturbances, both in intensity and extent, have thrown Bihar in the shade. Any further prolongation of these disturbances would seriously disturb the situation in the Eastern Punjab where, according to the Punjab Governor's report, high tension is prevailing all over. I have no doubt in my mind that only the severest measures can curtail the duration of these disturbances, particularly in the rural areas in Northern and Western Punjab, and I would impress upon you, with all the earnestness at my command, the desirability—in fact the necessity—of enforcing martial law in the worst effected areas. I feel that the situation warrants it and the failure of the efforts of the civil power to bring the situation in these areas under control fully justifies this step.

3. I realize how distasteful this step would be to you on the eve of your departure from India. In fact, I have often expressed my regret at the fact that the end of your Viceroyalty should see a situation hardly less alarming and tragic than its commencement. The latter was the legacy of the past and we still take pleasure in recalling how the effective intervention of a military mind contributed to the alleviation of the situation. I hope that firm and determined action of the kind I have suggested within the next few days will enable you to hand over to your successor a better legacy than you received from your predecessor.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

21. Punjab Police Alleged to Be Partial

Letter from J.J. Singh to Jawaharlal Nehru, 15 March 1947

J.J. Singh Papers, NMML.

Jawaharlalji:

I have been here since the 7th of February. Ever since my arrival in Lahore I have kept myself in close touch with American and British journalists who came along with me. Being 'whites',

they had greater opportunity to go about and see the things for themselves. Also the British officials 'opened up' a little more to them.

As a result of what I have seen and heard I can say that the following observations are fairly accurate.

The Punjab police has been far from impartial. That is true of Muslims and non-Muslims. But because about 80 per cent of them are Muslims, the non-Muslims populace has suffered at their hands.

In all western and northern Punjab more armed forces should be stationed. That may put a stop to the present orgy and may also discourage future outbursts.

The Hindus and Sikhs are not as well organized, as they were supposed to be. Muslims have proven to be much better organized.

The British officials in Lahore are openly contemptuous of the British Labour Government. Jenkins is reported to have said 'Attlee is a bloody fool.' The 'Burra Sahibs' are having a sordid satisfaction out of Indians' misery. They keep on saying 'We told you so.' They are almost gleeful. They are even foolish enough to think and hope that the Punjab trouble may change the British decision to quit India in June 1948.

5. Sikhs pride has been hurt. They would like to take revenge. I think they should be dissuaded from such fruitless ideas. Some way should be found to punish the culprits, so that others may learn a lesson. (I will be leaving on the 21st evening for Patna to see Gandhiji. Any message etc.?)

J.J. Singh

22. Casualty Figures in Punjab

Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Pethick-Lawrence, 16 March 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, p. 83.

MOST IMMEDIATE

CONFIDENTIAL

No. 53-G. Your telegram 3359 of 13th March. Following are very approximate casualty figures up to evening of 14th March.

2. First. Cities and towns. *Moslems*. Killed 109, seriously injured 133, total 242. *Hindus*. Killed 146, seriously injured 174, total 320. *Sikhs*. Killed 78, seriously injured 97, total 175. *Unclassified*. Killed 191, seriously injured 578, total 769. Excluding 57 police officers seriously injured unclassified category mainly non-Moslems.

3. Second. Rural areas. *Moslems*. Killed 1, seriously injured 2, total 3. *Hindus*. Killed 12, seriously injured 19, total 31. *Sikhs*. Killed nil, seriously injured 8, total 8. *Unclassified*. Killed 509, seriously injured 99, total 608. Unclassified category almost entirely non-Moslems.

4. Urban figures are complete for deaths officially verified and injured treated in hospital. Rural figures are quite incomplete.

5. We do not repeat nor issue classified casualty lists here as this inflames communal feeling. Unclassified dead and injured can doubtless be classified except for decomposed corpses but complete classification has not been attempted yet. Your reply in the House (? will, omitted) of course be published here.



23. 'Punjab Today—A Victim of Imperialist Manoeuvres'

Article by P.C. Joshi in *People's Age*, 16 March 1947.

The utter falsity of the Attlee promise to transfer power stands revealed in the hell-fires let loose in the Punjab. The transfer of power to Indian hands but provoking civil war among Indians by using one party against another is the imperialist game, and it has been unfolding itself.

In 1946 it was necessary to conciliate the Congress, the premier national organization, so the Cabinet Mission talked against Pakistan and offered it the chance of forming a Ministry in the Punjab and created the hope that it could keep the Punjab away from compulsory grouping.

In 1947 it is necessary to conciliate the League, so the latest Attlee Declaration threatening the Congress to accept compulsory grouping unequivocally or face partition, and the threat has been underlined by the fall of the Punjab Coalition Ministry.

The imperialist manoeuvre has been stage-managed in the crudest way. The seasoned British stage, 'non-communal' Khizar, suddenly become riot-ridden Punjab where rioting is spreading even faster than it did in Bengal or Bihar. The Punjab is neither in the hands of the Congress nor the League but of Governor Jenkins; Section 93 has been proclaimed.

The great Land of Five Rivers is being used as a British pawn to force the Congress to get the League inside the British designed Constituent Assembly and produce a Constitution as per British dictation and needs or accept partition as the alternative with the British dictating terms to both separately, which they with true imperialist hypocrisy called 'transfer of power'.

Result of Congress-League Policies

The Punjab is under curfew, the golden city of Amritsar is in flames, women and children are flying for shelter. British armoured... on the streets. British brigades are being rushed. Horror and dishonor could not go further.

And it would have never come to this but for the fact that the leaders of the Congress and the League have been following the disastrous policy of ... the British and pursue the most shameless power politics against each other and play straight into British hands.

The same League leaders who started the struggle against Ordinance Raj agreed to pass it as an Act; the same leaders who announced Khizar as a British puppet and traitor welcome him back inside the League, just for the right to form a Ministry under Governor Jenkins.

The same Congress and Akali leaders who doggedly and rightly oppose the partition of India now shamelessly demand the partition of the Punjab, the same leaders who talk loudly of 'Quit India' have no objection to Governor Jenkins' arbitrary rule rather than let a League Ministry be formed.

It is all a game of power-politics pursued by those who are out to safeguard the vested interests either of the landlords or of the capitalists at the cost of disruption among the masses.

The League leaders talk in the name of the Muslim masses, but are now willing to enact the Ordinance to suppress the Hindu and Muslim tenants and safeguard the interests of the landlords.

The Congress leaders had already agreed to the Ordinance to effectively... the voice of workers and peasants under the pretext of suppressing communalism.

Could the astute rulers desire better Indian leaders to play their military game against the freedom of Middle-Eastern peoples and a base against the Soviet Union?

Hence the British interest in weakening the Punjab through civil war today and keeping it in safe hands is very genuine. The Punjab's calamity today may be the world's tomorrow if the Punjab's and India's leaders are not made to make a sharp right about turn.

The Communist Party outlines and will tirelessly pursue the following course to save the Punjab from going deeper into the imperialist-planned abyss and lift it to its proper place in India's march to freedom.

All Parties' Peace Committee

The Communist Party was the first that has always called and worked for an All Parties Peace Committee. One has been announced in the Press but the names of trade union, kisan and Communist leaders are missing from it, that is, just of those elements who have fought the riot danger all through and the hardest.

The experience of Bombay and Calcutta reveals that it is bureaucrats and the worst riot-mongering politicians who insist on Communist expulsion so that they can paralyze such Committees. We warn against this danger.

The Communist Party will endeavor its hardest to form all inclusive Peace Committees in every mohalla and village to rouse the workers, peasants and the mass of common, people against riot-mongers, whoever they be, and defend their hearths and homes.

We appeal to leaders of all parties to join hands and demand full facilities and civil liberties for the anti-riot campaign. Without this there can be no popular initiative, and the police and the military will continue to rule the day and let the situation worsen while goonda raj remains.

We warn that any popular party that does not join hands in this will be guilty of leaving the people helpless and defenceless under British terror against all communities.

All Parties' Ministry for Peace, People's Needs

The Communist Party was the first to call for an All Parties Coalition Ministry as the only way to certain communal peace in the Province. Our warning went unheeded and today after the orgy of fratricide the same call is coming from other parties.

Once again they give the warning that the reactionary power-politicians must not be allowed to exploit the urge of the common people for unity, only to hide their own factional manoeuvrings and put the blame on other parties under cover of a popular slogan.

The Governor's Raj must go and a united Popular Ministry must come. But it will need a firm stand by progressive anti-imperialist elements inside all popular parties told intense mass pressure by common Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs to ensure.

FIRST, that today's communal and reactionary elements inside all parties who have brought the Punjab to its present plight are isolated and kept out of any new Ministry, and

SECONDLY, that the new coalition must be based not only on the best elements inside the Congress, League and Akalis but that it is pledged to an emergent practical programme of:

Maintaining communal peace through popular initiative and cooperation;

Withdrawal of the Ordinance; Restoration of full civil liberties;

Guaranteeing the fulfillment of people's needs by taking prompt and emergent measures against blackmarketeers and profiteering capitalists and by trying landlords who are worst food thieves, all of whom together are intensifying the miseries of the people, making them desperate;

Enforcing living wage for all workers and employees;

Banning ejectments of tenants; and

Introduction of legislation to abolish landlordism and give land to the tiller.

There is no prospect of peace in the Province, nor is the well-being of its people possible, unless the Popular Ministry is pledged to the democratic programme of strengthening the people, crushing the vested interests and checking the bureaucracy.

'Let Punjabis Decide Punjab's Future'

An All-Parties Ministry is the only way out of the present tragic crisis. The imperialist bureaucracy could act the incendiary because it could exploit the deep differences among the leaders of the popular parties about the future of the Punjab.

The Punjab is the common homeland of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs who have all suffered together under the present policies of their leaders.

Unless progressive elements inside every popular party, backed by the common people can force agreement on the only democratic basis possible, namely, that the future of the Punjab shall be decided by the Punjabis, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, as equals, through the plebiscite of all, the British imperialist will impose their own solution, form the Ministry that suits them best, and the people will only know Police Raj, profiteers' domination, provocateurs of politics.

Punjab at the Parting of Ways

The Punjab stands at the parting of the ways. It can become the problem of India leading not only to the partition of India but also of the Punjabis, or it can show the way to India saving its own unity and helping to build the unity of India on a new democratic foundation through the efforts of its own people, aided by its progressive leaders.

It is a tough, hard battle in the land of Bhagat Singh, inspired by his memory—out of the tragedy of fratricide and the Governor's Raj, today the Communist Party works for the glory of brotherly unity against British manoeuvres, for free and united Punjab in a free, united India where all will be equal, free and happy.

24. Measures Suggested by Baldev Singh and Nehru

Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 16 March 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 82–3.

IMMEDIATE

CONFIDENTIAL

No. 52-G. Addressed Viceroy repeated Secretary of State. Punjab situation. My immediately preceding telegram. There has been no further approach to me by any Punjab Leader. Nehru talked, with me for an hour on 14th evening. He advocated martial law in disturbed areas but

was unaware of conditions in which martial law can be imposed. Similar demand has been made by others including Baldev Singh. Nehru said quite rightly that disturbances must be suppressed with utmost firmness. This is in fact being done but politicians seldom appreciate difficulty of regaining control in broken country with bad communications. With long term purposes Nehru advocated national [notional] partition on territorial basis and [?Ministers] deliberating separately on matters allocated to new provinces. Legislature would be divided similarly by convention though formal vote of House as a whole would be needed to give effect to any measure (gr. crpt) and Legislature as a whole would deal as now with matters of common concern. Nehru's point is that arrangement must be such as to fit by convention into framework of present constitution. There may be something in this.

[Para 2, on Sir E. Jenkins' visit that day to Sargodha, Mianwali and Lyallpur, omitted.]

3. Situation still very grave with talk of reprisals and civil war. I visit Attock and Rawalpindi tomorrow.

25. Notional Partition of Punjab

Extract from the Record of an Interview between Evan Jenkins and Jawaharlal Nehru,
17 March 1947

SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 300–1.

...3. In recording this note yesterday I omitted to mention that Pt Nehru said he had talked to Master Tara Singh, and felt that a 'notional' partition might work—he had given me his views on it during our earlier talk here. I replied that any arrangement that would serve as a 'bridge' would be worth trying. I added that it was essential to try to get a popular ministry into office within reasonable time.

ENCLOSURE

A. *Legal points*

The following might be included in any legislation:

- (1) Forcible conversion to be punishable with death. (What section of the IPC covers this?)
- (2) Destruction of religious places and religious books to be similarly punishable. (Same query. Destruction by fire is already covered.)
- (3) Conspiracy should be covered.
- (4) Stabbing might be dealt with by a special system of collective fines, for example, if Muslims stabbed in a village, Hindus pay, and *vice versa*.
- (5) Military should be given powers to search and arrest. (I have already referred to L.R.)
- (6) Trials to be summary. (Ordinance provides for this, and I have asked L.R. to see whether provisions are suitable.)
- (7) Ordinance to be given retrospective effect. (I said I thought this was impossible on legal grounds though I agreed whole-heartedly in principle.)

B. *Executive matters*

- (1) Special search to be made for Sikh women alleged to have been seized by Muslims. Master Tara Singh attaches supreme importance to this. Orders should be issued at once to the districts concerned to go into this matter and make searches where necessary.

- (2) Zaildars and village officials who have taken part in disturbances, or have not helped, to be suspended, and this to be announced publicly.
- (3) New legislation to be widely published. (I agree.)
- (4) Special arrangements to be made for investigation. (This is already in hand.)

Necessary action should be taken immediately where indicated.

26. Problem of Refugees

Telegram from Evan Jenkins to G.E.B. Abell, 17 March 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, p. 84.

IMMEDIATE

CONFIDENTIAL

No. 55-G. Addressed PSV, repeated Secy of State.

Punjab situation. Immediately preceding telegram. I spent today in Attock and Rawalpindi. We already have something like 25,000 refugees on our hands from these two districts and Jhelum and must cater for 35,000. Attacks on non-Muslims have been organized with extreme savagery. Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi believes that in his district alone there may be 5,000 casualties including killed, injured and missing. Military opinion is that we shall regain physical control within a week but feeling between communities is very bad indeed and there is no sign of improvement.

2. I saw Ghazanfar Ali, Mamdot, Iftikharuddin at Rawalpindi. They seemed genuinely shocked at brutality and treachery shown by members of their party and undertook to do everything possible to stop disturbances.

I had further talk with Nehru this evening. He was well satisfied with progress in Multan which he visited today. He made various suggestions about special legislation now being considered. He returns to Delhi after visiting Amritsar tomorrow. *Ends.*

27. Continued Rioting in Different Areas of the Province

Extract from a Letter from Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 17 March 1947

IOR, R/3/1/89, Acc. No. 3414, NAI.

SECRET

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, LAHORE

NO. 657.

Dear Lord Wavell,

...3. Major disturbances in the cities and towns have been confined to Lahore, Amritsar, Multan, Rawalpindi and Jullundur. Lesser disturbances have occurred at Ludhiana, Sialkot, Kamoke in the Gujranwala district, Hoshiarpur, and Khushab in the Shahpur district.

In Lahore the rioting differed little in kind from communal rioting of the past. Casualties were fairly heavy, but there was no extraordinary destruction of property.

In Amritsar the main feature of the rioting was incendiarism. Several important streets look as though they had had a heavy raid, with many houses and shops completely down and the road and pavements heaped high with rubble. The electric transmission lines were broken, and for some time the greater part of the city was in darkness. Casualties were heavy; the Muslims suffered worse than the other communities.

At Multan the trouble was started on 5th March by a sudden procession of non-Muslim students shouting 'Qaid-i-Azam murda-bad'. Between 12 noon and 3.15 p.m. it is estimated that about 150 people—nearly all Hindus—lost their lives. There was much incendiarism, but the damage as compared with that in Amritsar is small.

At Rawalpindi, as in Lahore, the rioting seems to have followed the pattern of earlier communal riots. I have not been through Rawalpindi City, but from the air it does not appear that many buildings have been burnt. Casualties were fairly heavy.

There is nothing special to note about the other cities and towns. Jullundur had the worst of the lesser outbreaks, and Ludhiana probably came next.

The urban disturbances were brought under control pretty quickly with the aid of troops.

3. The rural disturbances have been far more serious. The major outbreaks are so far confined to the Rawalpindi and Attock districts, the part of the Jhelum district round Chakwal, and the Multan district.

Trains have been attacked in Mianwali, and there is a report in this morning about the looting of an entire train on the Khushab–Kundian line somewhere near the Mianwali border.

4. In the rural areas gravely affected there has been extreme savagery. In the triangle Taxile–Murree–Gujar Khan there was a regular butchery of non-Muslims, particularly Sikhs. Cruelty and treachery seem to have been common. General Messervy told me that he had seen in hospital a child whose hands had been cut off; there are at least two well-authenticated stories of non-Muslims being lured into 'peace committees' and then murdered; and in one village, Sasali, a party of Sikhs, who surrendered to the Muslim attackers on a promise that their lives would be spared, were murdered out of hand. The most brutal killings seem to have been in the triangle to which I have referred, but there has been frightful brutality outside it, and everywhere in the district looting and arson have been common.

In Attock the Chauntra area, which is very close to Rawalpindi, was affected in much the same way. In the rest of the district there seem to have been fewer killings than in Rawalpindi, but quite as much burning and looting. A common method of attack has been for the Muslims in a village to put white flags on their houses and to invite the Muslims of the neighbouring villages to come in and deal with property not so marked.

In the Chakwal neighbourhood of the Jhelum district a large village, Dhudial, was sacked, but the Police and troops were able to inflict fairly heavy casualties on the attackers.

In Multan murder, arson and looting were much the same as in the districts of the Rawalpindi Division, but the area affected (the Sadar Police Station and part of the Shujabad tahsil) is flat and relatively easy to control. The troops seem to have inflicted fairly heavy casualties on a mob at an early stage, and though the loss of life and property must have been heavy, it is certainly less than that in the Rawalpindi district.

...7. It is very difficult to account for this extraordinarily violent rural movement. General Messervy thinks that there are some signs of organization and conspiracy—in parts of Rawalpindi outbreaks seem to have occurred almost simultaneously, and the raid at Murree, to which I referred in my letter of 9th March, appears to have been carefully planned and carried out. All Muslims in the affected districts seem to be involved in or sympathetic to the movement. The Commander 7th Division told me when I saw him yesterday that attacks on non-Muslims had been led in some cases by retired Army officers—some of them pensioners with honorary Commissioned rank. The Muslim section of the local notables, to whom I spoke at Campellpur yesterday, were extremely sulky, and though some of them are beginning to

be frightened, there is little doubt that they believe that the movement was inevitable and are not prepared to oppose it. The most probable theory is that the growth of the Pakistan idea from 1943 onwards, the extreme communalism of the election campaign of 1945–46, the frustration which followed it, the propaganda against the Coalition Ministry, the Muslim League agitation, HMG's statement of 20th February, and Khizar's resignation combined to touch off an explosive mixture which had been forming for some time. The Muslims say that they were influenced by rumours of a large Sikh Army marching on the north; also that the movement is a spontaneous outburst against black-marketing by non-Muslims. It is more likely that they believe that by exterminating non-Muslims now they will make their districts a safe base for operations against the other communities in due course. No educated man could reasonably believe the story about the Sikh army, and though opportunity has been taken to wipe out economic scores, resentment at the controls and the way in which non-Muslims make money out of them was not in my judgment the immediate cause of the trouble.

8. The disturbances have produced a crop of special problems:

(1) The non-Muslims are vehemently bitter against the civil services and particularly against the Police. The District Officers in the Rawalpindi Division were not happy about police morale and were inclined to make the most of any indication that the police would not do their duty. There have also been complaints of partiality against the troops—the Commander 7th Indian Division told me that one of these complaints was justified. I shall now be bombarded with demands (they have in fact already begun) for the transfer of Muslim officials from the districts affected, for the use of non-Muslim troops, for the issue of arms licences to non-Muslims, and so on. We can only do our best with the resources we have, and as long as I am in Section 93 I do not propose to issue arms licences so that the minorities in any part of the Province may be able to fight more effectively against the other community.

(2) The ordinary law, even as supplemented by the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance, 1946, is inadequate for disturbances on this scale. Certain offences common during communal disturbances must be made punishable with death, and the troops and police should have authority to use more than the minimum force in dealing with rioters. Troops should also in my opinion have power to arrest and search on a reasonable suspicion that an offence has been committed. These matters have already been referred to Your Excellency and are being dealt with. I am referring separately a measure to give us power to impose collective fines and to deal much more comprehensively and promptly than the Police Act permits with the assessment and distribution of compensation....

Yours sincerely,
E.M. JENKINS

28. Need to Restore Normalcy in Punjab

Statement by Jawaharlal Nehru at a Press Conference in Lahore, *The Tribune*, 17 March 1947.

The situation in the Punjab is more or less under control. I propose to say little about my Punjab visit at this time. I have seen ghastly sights and I have heard of behaviour by human beings which would degrade even the brute. The first thing to be done is to put an end to every kind of disorderly action. The second thing is to protect and rescue the people who may be threatened or are in danger, more specially the women, who have been abducted or

removed by force, must be brought back to their own homes. Then other problems like the care of refugees and rehabilitation have to be tackled.

I think that the present disturbances will be completely ended within a very few days. So far as I have been able to see, the military are acting efficiently and with rapidity.

There is never any need for panic for whatever has happened, much less today when the situation is more or less under control. The man who is panicky is a useless citizen and a danger to others.

Obviously all that has happened is intimately connected with political affairs. I prefer to say nothing about that aspect except this: if political affairs are to be conducted in this way then they cease to be political affairs and become some kind of a jungle warfare which reduces human habitation to the state of a desert. If there is any grain of intelligence in a person, he must realize that whatever the political objective, he may aim at, this is not the way to attain it. Any such attempt must bring, as it has in a measure brought, ruin and destruction in its train. Let people struggle for their political aim if they want to. But they can do so as human beings with a measure of human dignity.

I am not enamoured of slogans anywhere. The Punjab is specially fond of slogans. There may be times when slogans are useful and good but when we are up against these hard facts which we face today, these slogans cease to have any meaning. In particular slogans cursing and denouncing others are peculiarly unbecoming and objectionable. Slogans with *murdabad* attached to them are not brave slogans but indicate the mentality of a coward or a bully.

India will go along this path to her destined end of independence and nothing that has happened is going to stop this. So, I am sure, will the Punjab as a part of India, in spite of everything that has happened, or is likely to happen. Mighty historic forces are at work driving us all in that direction in spite of our own follies. It is up to us, however, to march ahead with dignity and with head erect or crawl like animals in the field.

The Punjab has had a hard lesson. Let it learn from it and not lose itself in a sea of hatred and reprisals which can only lead to mutual destruction and infamy. Let us all build together and prepare ourselves for the great things to come.

A relief fund has been started and an appeal has been issued for it. I hope that this fund will be liberally subscribed to and that it is to be employed to give help to a large number of sufferers of these disturbances regardless of creed or any other distinction.

29. 'Protection of Minorities a Sacred Duty'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 18 March 1947.

Bombay, Monday.—Qaed-e-Azam Mr M.A. Jinnah, President of the All India Muslim League, has directed the Punjab Provincial Muslim League 'to give its unstinted and wholehearted co-operation to the Administration in the Punjab to restore immediately order in the Province' and has also reminded the Musalmans of the Punjab that 'it is their sacred duty to protect the minorities that live amongst them', according to Mian Mumtaz Daultana, General Secretary of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League.

Disclosing this to an API correspondent today before his departure for Lahore by plane, Mian Mumtaz Daultana, who was deputed by the Punjab Provincial Muslim League to see Qaed-e-Azam Jinnah in Bombay said: 'I came to acquaint the Qaed-e-Azam of the terrible situation in the Punjab.'

'I take back with me two mandatory orders from him. Firstly, the Muslim League in the Punjab must give its unstinted and whole-hearted cooperation to the Administration to restore immediately order in the Province'.

FULLEST CO-OPERATION

'We are to offer our fullest and unreserved co-operation to every party and community which was this object in view, and we are to seek the help of every man of goodwill in that ravaged Province.

'Secondly, it is the sacred duty of the Mussalmans of the Punjab to protect the minorities that live amongst them'.

The Punjab Muslim League leader declared that the entire Muslim population would be mobilized by the Punjab Muslim League to achieve this object, because, he said, 'we feel that guarding the honour, security and well-being of our Hindu and Sikh minorities is our first duty before God and man'.

Mian Mumtaz Daultana invited everyone in the Punjab to help in the task of restoring tranquillity and peace in the Province.

30. Hindu Mahasabha Violates Orders

Press Statement by Ashutosh Lahiry on Punjab, 18 March 1947
AIHM Papers, File No. C-165, NMML.

Ashutosh Lahiry, General Secretary, All India Hindu Mahasabha, in course of a Press Statement says:

'It is unfortunate that the Governor of the Punjab should have issued orders banning the entry of the President and General Secretary of the All India Hindu Mahasabha, when we were served with the order at Ferozepore Cantonment Station, we decided not to violate the order, for the time being, firstly, because we wanted to give some time to the Punjab Government to realize the full implications of the ban and secondly, because the situation in Ferozepore itself was so tense that our defiance of the ban might have easily led to unpleasant developments, which we were most anxious to avoid. In fact, during the three hours that we spent at Ferozepore Cantonment Station, a pretty large crowd numbering several hundreds had gathered round us, apparently in excited mood, and had we decided to defy the ban we felt that this would not have conduced to maintenance of communal peace and harmony.

Now that sufficient time have elapsed, the Government of the Punjab must realize that Hindu Mahasabha cannot stultify itself by being deprived, indefinitely, of its right to serve the stricken Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab in the staggering calamity that has overtaken them. The ban is an insult on intolerable affront to the Hindu Mahasabha, which we cannot obviously take it lying down.

I remember when the Bihar tragedy was being enacted how the Bihar Government forthwith allowed Moslem League leaders of Bengal and other provinces to run to the succour of the Moslems in Bihar and enable them to make a detailed tour of the riot affected areas of the province. They virtually invaded Bihar with a large number of trucks, lorries, gypcars and over one thousand members of the Moslem National Guards for rendering relief to the Moslems. If the Bihar Government could trust the League Leaders, even though they appeared on the scene with such strength and evident preparedness, why cannot the Punjab Government permit even a visit of the leading persons of the Hindu Mahasabha who are certainly the most responsible

men of the organization. To say that it is necessary in the interest of communal peace is to malign us and the organization we represent.

We desire to carry to our brotheren of the Punjab a message of hope and confidence. It is obvious that the Hindus and Sikhs are the main sufferers in this great tragedy, since all the acts of murder, arson and loot had taken place in North and South Western Punjab which have got an overwhelming Moslem majority. But up till now what have the Moslem League leaders, the leaders of the aggressor community, so far done? One of the League Members of the Viceroy's Council who by his provocative utterances and a campaign of hatred and violence against the Hindus have been largely responsible for stirring the Moslem mass mind to acts of fanatical fury has been sitting inert in a western Punjab district all the time the Punjab has been in flames and we have no knowledge that he has stirred finger for pacifying his comrades and helping the government in preventing the massacre and spoliation of the Hindus and Sikhs. Another League member of the Viceroy's Council who is now visiting the North Western Frontier Province on a "Peace Mission" has been giving general call to the Moslems to enroll themselves in thousands in the Moslem National Guard, at a time when the conflagration has been dangerously spread in the North Western Frontier Province. It is the time for a responsible Moslem League leader who, besides, holds such an important office of the Government of India, to start on a recruiting campaign for Moslem National Guards when we know what part the Moslem National Guards have played in the Punjab catastrophe and in various other parts of India.

The Hindu Mahasabha has no desire to disturb peace or to hamper in any way the restoration of normal conditions in the unhappy province. But we cannot allow our anxiety for communal peace and harmony to deflect us from the obvious call of duty and from submitting to restrictions unworthy of our self-respect. We look upon the action of the Punjab Government as an act of senseless perversity which if, persisted in, will ultimately result in defeating the purpose for which it has been alleged to have been taken. We shall take whatever steps we think necessary in vindication of our just rights and liberties. But before we do so, we must give a timely notice to the Punjab Government that the responsibility for the future developments must rest on their shoulders'.

Ashutosh Lahiry

31. 'Haryana Prant Will Resist Communal Domination'

The Tribune, 18 March 1947.

Lahore, 16 March.—Pandit Sri Ram Sharma, MLA, Member, Constituent Assembly, says in a press statement:

'The latest pronouncement of the Congress High Command hinting at division of the Punjab is not unwelcome to predominantly Hindu districts of the Haryana Prant. If the Muslim League after the Quit India declaration of the British Government, still persists in its demand of a vague Pakistan, quite independent of the Union Centre, there remains no other alternative to the Haryana district, but to stand as one man for separation, Haryana was not originally a part of this province. Sikhs are already in favour of dividing the Punjab.

The Anti-Pakistan Day has been enthusiastically observed with complete hartals, big public meetings and peaceful demonstrations throughout Haryana. We would like to remain in a United Punjab, governed by a true coalition as a part of the Indian Union, but if it is not to be so, and then the Haryana will be in open revolt against communal domination.

The monster gathering at Rohtak with a view to expressing its full determination against Pakistan and its forerunner, the Muslim League Ministry, was jointly addressed by the Congress, Hindu Unionist, Hindu Sabha and all other non-League representatives.

The same is the case everywhere in the south-eastern part of the Punjab.

32. Congress Criticism of Punjab Police

Extract from a Letter from Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 19 March 1947

TOP, Vol. IX, pp. 990–1.

PRIVATE AND SECRET

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE, NEW DELHI,

Thank you for your letter of the 14th March. This will be my last letter to you in this series.

2. You have seen Jenkins' telegrams about the situation in the Punjab. Though there is still danger of retaliation, things have settled down somewhat and I hope that the worst may be over. Nehru was most careful during his visit not to embarrass the authorities. The general tendency on the part of the Congress and the non-Muslims generally, is to criticize the police, of whom the majority are Muslims, and to seek to put more reliance on the military authorities under the Defence Member. The Muslims, on the other hand, are inclined to suggest that the Defence Member interferes with military dispositions, so as to place Hindu troops where they can oppress Muslims. This of course is quite untrue. Jenkins has promulgated a drastic Ordinance to increase the penalties for certain offences and to give the Police additional powers; and I have issued a Central Ordinance to give the Military the same powers.

3. According to Colin Reid, the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent, who saw Jinnah recently, 'Jinnah has no intention of making any move in response to the Congress resolution until he is sent for by Mountbatten. Reid got the impression that he might accept the Cabinet Mission's Plan if the Congress accepted it in unequivocal terms. It however seems most unlikely that the Congress will so accept the plan since events in the Punjab have made it very difficult for them to "let down the Sikhs" as they would put it..'

33. Migration of Muslims into East Punjab

Letter from Malik Mohammad to M.A. Jinnah, 19 March 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 309–10.

HISSAR

Respected Jinnah Sahib,

The current Congress movement for division of the Punjab into two parts is dangerous for us Muslims. It is essential that a good number of respectable Musalmans should settle down in East Punjab districts to save Muslims there from the Hindus. All this land is agricultural and inhabited by farmers. If some *zamindars* purchase agricultural land here, the Muslim population would increase and the local Musalmans will also become safe. Of course, you know better as to what should be done.

We Muslims are ready to sacrifice our lives at your call.

[Your] servant,
MALIK MUHAMMAD

34. Critical Situation in Punjab and NWFP

Letter from Gokul Chand Narang to Vallabhbhai Patel, 19 March 1947

² *SPC*, Vol. V, pp. 282–4.

5, Montgomery Road
Lahore

Dear Sardar Patel,

On 11 December 1946 I sent to you a fairly long letter under registered cover giving you some facts about the situation in the Frontier Province. I got a postal receipt from your P.A. but as you were then touring in Bombay Presidency I am not sure if my letter was at all placed in your hands. I did not remind you as I did not feel sure that even if you got it you would acknowledge it. In any case, I am now enclosing a copy of it for your perusal.

My apprehensions, you will see, have proved more than correct, if you have been following what has been happening in the Punjab from the 5th up to now. Your colleagues have paid visits to this province but we are all in the dark as to what steps they propose to take to put an end to the present trouble and to make recurrence of the trouble impossible. The situation in the Punjab and the NWFP is tragic. I do not believe that the number of casualties officially given is correct and the general apprehension is that the casualties may be many times more than what has been officially communicated to the authorities in the Punjab and by the Punjab authorities to your Government. The situation is very critical indeed. The time for talking is over. If you want to save the Punjab and the NWFP, and I may say even India, you will have to wake up. If the future action of the Government is to be judged from what they have done to meet the present trouble the outlook is gloomy indeed. If the Government has not been able to cope with the present trouble, what hopes can we cherish for its success in case the law-breakers in the Punjab are reinforced from the NWFP and from the Tribal area! A large proportion of the people are armed and I speak it on the authority of a high police officer that the mob of 12,000 odd that surrounded Mianwali was armed to the teeth not only with rifles but with tommy guns and hand grenades. You might have also seen a picture taken from the air of the mob marching from Golra to invade Rawalpindi. I am enclosing a cutting for your information.

I am writing to you this letter which is a sort of SOS as we have reason to believe that more trouble is ahead. Please read the cuttings from the Statesman of the 16th and 17th and from the Ajit of the 19th enclosed herewith. I hope you will consider the following suggestions that I venture to make for consideration by you and your colleagues:

1. The army should be strengthened as I have no doubt in my mind that when the trouble spreads the Muslim section of the army will go over to the rebels and you will have to meet a large trained Muslim army in addition to the irregulars from the Punjab, NWFP and trans-frontier tribes if not from Afghanistan itself. The cry of reduction in military expenditure should be silenced and military organization should be given preference over all other programmes whether of social reforms or of commercial and industrial expansions.
2. You should see that all voters to the legislatures in all the Congress-governed provinces are allowed licenses for firearms.
3. Muslim National Guards are being openly recruited and many of them are being armed. They have been going about in uniform with steel helmets on their heads firing

on the Hindus with illicit arms or arms lent to them by the Muslim policemen. There is no reason why the Congress should not organize a similar band of civic guards for the maintenance of peace. If the Congress had acted upon the suggestion which I made to Mahatma Gandhi eight years ago and also to the then Premiers of the first Congress Governments the Congress would have had an army of two millions at its command even if without any firearms. If men are there properly drilled and trained it does not take long to train them in the use of arms.

4. You must strengthen the air force as without an air force no battle can be fought in these days. You should also encourage the establishment of flying clubs all over the country and as was the case of a few years ago and may be even now you should liberally subsidise them. In Bombay and Madras you must have nautical schools and should persuade the Indian State having sea ports in their territories to do the same.
5. If funds permit I would reiterate the suggestion of conscription on a peacetime footing as suggested in my last letter.

I trust that you will not look upon this letter of mine as coming from an alarmist but I visualize the situation and I have to apprise you of the danger as my previous anticipations in this direction have proved absolutely correct. The Hindus suffered for centuries because they did not take the first incursions and invasions seriously and woke up when it was too late.

I have refrained from discussing political and constitutional questions. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has been here and I have no doubt that he will take you and his other colleagues into confidence and arrive at a satisfactory solution of the constitutional muddle in the province. There is some difference of opinion regards the partition of the Punjab but I can assure you that if the dividing line is the Ravi river it would satisfy a vast majority of the Hindus and Sikhs.

Yours sincerely,
G.C. Narang

35. Report from Punjab Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report for the First Half of March 1947 for Punjab,
20 March 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.

1. POLITICAL AND COMMUNAL: One of the most remarkable features of the fortnight under report has been the speed with which events have moved. On the 2nd of March, following the settlement with Government, the Muslim League celebrated a 'Victory Day'. No communal clash accompanied the observances but they were widespread and, in affording evidence of Muslim solidarity and arrogance, they intensified the fears and hatred of the other communities and increased their determination not to be subjected to unwanted domination. On the same day, the Premier announced the resignation of the Coalition Ministry in a statement (to the effect) that he was taking this step because he felt that His Majesty's Government's pronouncement of the 20th February made it incumbent on him to leave the field clear for the Muslim League to come to some arrangement with the other parties. On the 3rd of March the Punjab Assembly met only to be postponed on the first day of its Budget Session, and HE the Governor invited the leader of the Muslim League party to form a Government. On the 4th of March, disorder commenced and the Premier and his colleagues, in acknowledgement

that a situation had arisen which was beyond their powers of control, signified their inability to act longer as a caretaker Government and their desire that their resignations should have immediate effect. On the 5th March, in the presence of the Muslim League's failure to form a Government, a proclamation was issued under Section 93 of the Government of India Act of 1935 transferring responsibility to the Governor. Since then events which have followed thick and fast have been in the characters of communal conflagrations. On one hand, there has been vigorous Governmental action to control the situation, which has been increasingly effective, and has thrown into bold relief the political bankruptcy, communal prejudices and general lack of sanity displayed on the other.

The serious disorder in the Province started in Lahore during the forenoon of 4th of March, when the Police were attacked by Hindu and Sikh students outside the district courts, and the first Police casualties occurred. In the first fury of mass wrath animosity was directed mainly against the Police, but this phase did not last long. On the afternoon of the same day, and inevitably, communal rioting broke out accompanied by cases of stabbing and arson. By the 6th of March both Amritsar and Multan were gravely affected and much damage had been caused to life and property. Since that date, with the news of grave events radiating from Lahore, there has been blood shed and burning in many districts and rural areas have paid the price levied by... fury as well as towns. Many of the gravest incidents have taken place in the districts which form the Rawalpindi Division where Muslims are in the majority. In the Rawalpindi and Attock districts in particular there is every reason to think that casualties have been heavy. Up to the 5th March the known victims of internecine strife numbered 136 killed and 1,110 injured. The figures in both categories are most certain to be much greater, there has been more accurate counting after the madness was passed.

None of the political parties of the major communities can escape blame for what has happened. The General Election of 1946 was fought in an atmosphere of extreme communal bitterness and all communities made the most of communal disturbances in other parts of India later in the year. The Muslim League...impressed others with the potency of direct action... brought communal feelings to the boiling point... weakened respect for authority. The Sikh and Hindu leaders... escape censure for they were themselves responsible for their inflammatory speeches, and the Hindu leaders for their unconcealed abetment of everything the Sikhs did and said. His Majesty's Government's statement supplied a spur where one was not required, and the Coalition Government's resignation, interpreted as a move to give the Muslims an immediate advantage, added frenzy to a situation already big with danger. In circumstances such as these it would have been remarkable if peace and good reason had prevailed. The immediate cause of the trouble in Lahore can be traced to a huge Hindu and Sikh public meeting which was held on the night of the 3rd of March, at which there was dangerous and truculent talk, and to statements by the Sikh leaders that they were determined to fight Pakistan, and would oppose the formation of a Muslim League Government at all costs. The harsh attitude thus displayed has been maintained and such overtures as there have been from the League have been rejected, including one which offered the Sikhs five seats in a Cabinet of eleven. Inter community political negotiation has virtually been broken off and there is no doubt that Sikh and Hindu favour is now strongly in support of a division of the Punjab. The Congress resolution which has advocated this as a solution has the backing of most of the members of these two communities and particularly of those to whom partition would grant the right to govern the area they now inhabit. Sikhs and Hindus in places where Muslims predominate have much less enthusiasm for such a plan but any outcry against it has not yet developed.

H.E. the Governor has visited the areas which had suffered most and has done what he could to encourage hard-pressed officials in their difficult task and to help public man to a sense of their responsibility. The Police and the Army, from whom the greatest possible measure of willing help has been received, are active constantly in the worst area. As a result of their endeavors control is being increasingly established. However, it is control exercised by force. It has brought about little change in the peoples' mentality and has left communal tension radically unchanged. Because of this, and in the absence of any agreement between the leaders of the three committees, the future remains charged with gravity. The prospect is not improved by the brutality of some of the acts committed by the majority community in the areas most affected. When details of these acts become known, as inevitably they will, the danger of retaliation will arise in a degree fraught with much danger.

The All India Congress Working Committee's resolution suggesting partition as ours for the Punjab's disease has not had a favourable reception from the Nationalist Muslim organizations. They think that if minorities in Punjab are to be protected by this device, Muslim minorities in other provinces should be shown the same favour. As a result, both the Khaksars and the Ahrars have drawn closer to the League although important differences of opinion still/continue to divide them. The Communists are divided in their views on the same issue. One of the groups which goes to form the party in the province has condemned the resolution out of hand while the other has found merit in the proposal, provided separation is on a linguistic and cultural and not on a religious one. How they think that such a division could be affected they do not trouble to explain. Other parties have not had a great deal to say on the subject yet, but it can be accepted that their ideas are dominated by communal rather than political or national considerations.

2. LABOUR: In some places Canal and Revenue patwaries have continued their strike but so far their action has not resulted in much dislocation of Governmental work. The other Government servants who were threatening to strike, the ministerial staffs of Civil Departments, decided temporarily not to do so in view of the disturbed situation in the Province. In railway labour circles unrest continued and there were some short lived strikes at Rohri and other places. The most important matter, however, affecting railway was the decision taken to discharge the Communist leader, Mirza Muhammad Ibrahim, and some of his satellites, including Jagdish Chandra, the General Secretary of the Communist Union from railway employment. This action was taken on the 15th of March and despite it being known beforehand what was afoot the day passed without incident in the workshops where Mirza Ibrahim was employed. The probability that railway labour will demonstrate its protest against the action taken exists, but as stated in an earlier report the Communists find the present tense communal situation far from their liking for they fear that communalism may divide their labour following. In the circumstances there is reason for hope that if a demonstration is staged it will be less serious than would have been the case of the general situation had been normal.

3. ECONOMIC: The fortnight's communal disturbances had repercussions on the food situation in the Province. Damage to stocks of foodgrains was reported from the Amritsar, Multan, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Jhelum and Attock districts, but this was confined mostly to retail depots and the total loss though by no means small, was fortunately not very serious. Full details of losses to foodgrains are not yet available. Arrangements had to be made for the emergency supply of rations both in the rationed towns, where normal distribution and transport arrangements had to be completely dislocated, by opening emergency depots and arranging an immediate

supply of atta from the Mills. Similar arrangements had to be extended to non-rationed areas, where damage to property and similar things was serious and to the refugee camps opened in the Rawalpindi and Jhelum districts....

Akhtar Hussain
Chief Secretary to Government, Punjab.

36. Attitude of Ghazanfar Ali Khan towards the Communal Situation

Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Wavell, 20 March 1947
Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 93–4.

Immediate
Confidential
No. 64-G

Addressed Viceroy, repeated Secretary of State. Punjab situation. My immediately preceding telegram. Congress Hindus appear to be working up for an agitation against British element in the Punjab administration but signs are as yet not very definite. Ghazanfar Ali saw me this afternoon. He was complacent about rural massacre and suggested (a) a general election and (b) the formation of a purely Muslim League Government. I replied that no responsible person could possibly consider (a) and that after what had happened neither I nor any other British officer in the Punjab would have anything to do with (b) in the immediate future. I thought it best to make these points clear since folly and complacency of Muslim League leaders here are almost beyond belief. Khizar called shortly after Ghazanfar Ali and said that in his opinion general elections would be madness. It could only further inflame communal feeling and would not alter basic position in any way. He believed that establishment of purely Muslim League Government would lead immediately to bloodshed on a far larger scale than hitherto. He thought no stable Government possible in the Punjab now unless there were agreement at the Centre. Khizar reported his own district quiet. Muslim mobs had been assembled there by circulation of chits announcing falsely arrival of large Sikh Jathas. He had seen one of these chits but their authorship is unknown.

37. Atrocities Committed against Hindus and Sikhs

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Wavell, 22 March 1947
SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 15–16.

New Delhi

Dear Lord Wavell,

I am sorry to trouble you on the eve of your departure with the enclosed copy of a telegram which the Managing Editor of the Hindustan Times has received from the President of the Singh Sabha, Gujarkhan, in Rawalpindi district, and the former's letter to the Secretary to HE the Governor of the Punjab. But I thought that the description given there would be of interest to you. It may be an exaggerated picture, but it could not be wholly untrue.

2. You will notice that the Hindustan Times did not publish the telegram.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

**COPY OF MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT, SINGH SABHA, GUJARKHAN,
19 MARCH 1947**

MUSLIMS LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN OF GENERAL SLAUGHTER AND ARSON OF SIKH LIFE AND PROPERTY IN THE DISTRICTS OF CAMPBELLPORE RAWALPINDI AND CHAKWAL SUBDIVISION OF JHELM. GUJARKHAN AND PINDI TOWNS ARE CORDONED. TO SAVE THEIR HONOUR AND RELIGION HUNDREDS OF WOMEN JUMPED INTO WELLS AND COMMITTED SUICIDE. HUNDREDS OF SIKHS AND HINDUS HAVE BEEN BURNT AND BUTCHERED ALTHOUGH THEY VALIANTLY DEFENDED THEMSELVES AGAINST HEAVY ODDS. SIKHS ARE THE CHIEF TARGET. IN DUBHERAN SMALL VILLAGE IN KAHUTA TEHSIL PEOPLE AFTER WOUNDING WERE THROWN IN SMOULDERING FIRE. NUMBER OF GIRLS COMMITTED SUICIDE. AT DHAMALI NEAR DUBHERAN NUMBER OF SURVIVORS DOES NOT EXCEED 20 PERCENT. THESE RESIDENTS KEPT THE MUSLIM MOB SHOUTING PAKISTAN AT BAY FOR FOUR DAYS EVENTUALLY OVERPOWERED BY OVERWHELMINGLY LARGE NUMBER. MRS SANT GULABSINGH ADVOCATE JUMPED INTO THE WELL AND WAS FOLLOWED BY 60 WOMEN. NUMBER OF BUTCHERED IS VERY HEAVY. KAHUTA WAS BURNT BY MUSLIMS AFTER THE EVACUATION BY MILITARY. MEHLWAN DORA KAUNTRILA GULYANA DEHRA BAKHSHIA IN DHERA KHALSA ANDAN BHAGPUR BANDA BASSALI TAHAT PARI NARALI SAYYED DEVI TAWIN PANGRIN GORSIAN MOGHAL SANJOT NADJIL TALLA SAGRI KURI SIALA PINJORBAZAR OF KALLAR AND MANY OTHERS HAVE [BEEN] BURNT. AT DHALA 12 PERSONS WERE SET TO FIRE AFTER SPRINKLING OIL ON THEIR GARMENTS. SUKHO AND DAULTALA GAVE GOOD FIGHT AND BEFORE THEIR FALL MILITARY ARRIVED TO THEIR SUCCOUR. DHUDIAL RESIDENTS GAVE GOOD FIGHT TO MUSLIM MOB FOR FOUR DAYS. OFFICIALS ARRANGED PEACE AND TOOK AWAY LEGITIMATE ARMS FROM SIKHS WITHOUT DISARMING THE INSURGENT MUSLIMS WHO BURNT THE TOWN AFTER THIS. SIKHS' HAIR AND BEARDS FORCIBLY SHORN. HINDUS AND SIKHS COMPELLED TO EAT BEEF. GURDWARAS AND TEMPLES DESECRATED AND DESTROYED. EIGHT THOUSAND REFUGEES HAVE ARRIVED GUJARKHAN SO FAR AND LOCAL PUBLIC SPARING NO PAINS IN SERVICE. EVEN IN LOCAL CIVIL HOSPITAL MILK AND FOOD ARE SUPPLIED FREE TO SERIOUSLY WOUNDED BY NONOFFICIAL AGENCY. RETIRED MUSLIM MILITARY PERSONS CONDUCTED OPERATIONS. NONMUSLIMS IN VILLAGES OF GUJARKHAN AND KAHUTA TEHSIL ARE 26,000 AND 11,000 RESPECTIVELY. STATE OF AFFAIRS HIGHLY DEPLORABLE AND SURPASSES ALL INHUMAN ATROCITIES.

38. A Note on the Communal Outbreak in Punjab

Letter from Claude Auchinleck to G.E.B. Abell Enclosing a Report by Gen. Messervy,
22 March 1947.

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 111, NMML.

Top Secret & Personal.

D/O No. 80/P-1/47

My dear Abell,

I enclose an account by General Messervy, GOC-in-C Northern Command, giving his personal opinions on the recent communal outbreak in the Punjab.

I think HE may like to see this.

I invite particular attention to the remarks in para. 5, in view of the allegations which are certain to be made by interested parties. I would like to add that I am in entire agreement with the opinion expressed by General Messervy in para. 9 of the note. Unless effective action is taken by the leaders to compose their differences and restore mutual confidence between the

two main communities in the Punjab, I fear that the large part of the Army which is drawn from the Punjab may become infected with communalism. This is a contingency which no one can contemplate with equanimity at this juncture.

I shall be obliged if you will return the note to me when the Viceroy has read it.

Yours sincerely
Auchinleck

G.E.B. Abell, Esq, CIE, OBE,
Private Secretary to HE the Viceroy,
Viceroy's House.

SOME REMARKS ON THE DISTURBANCES IN THE NORTHERN PUNJAB

1. Causes

The first cause was politico-religious. The Muslim League, though a political party, has been framing its main propaganda on religious lines for some time. This has undoubtedly had a great effect on all Muslims in the Punjab, Pakistan and Islam together provide an almost irresistible force on the minds of the mass of comparatively uneducated Muslims. Then the intensive Muslim League campaign succeeded in forcing the resignation of the Unionist Punjab Government and was followed by militant anti-Pakistan statements by Master Tara Singh and other Sikh leaders, Muslim feelings were roused to a pitch of fanaticism. It only needed a spark to set alight the raging fires of religious passion. This was provided by anti-Pakistan meetings and processions in such places as Lahore, Amritsar, Multan and Rawalpindi. In Multan the Hindu-Sikh processionists were even so madly unwise as to raise the cry of 'Qaid-i-Azam Murdabad'. In the predominantly Muslim areas of Rawalpindi and Multan Divisions the fires spread rapidly to the rural areas.

There have been also two minor causes. The first is the economic element. Scarcity of cloth and some items of food, such as sugar, has undoubtedly been taken advantage of by the Hindu-Sikh bania community to profiteer and indulge in black market operations. The Govt controls were also mostly in the hands of Sikhs or Hindu agents and clerks. The Muslim peasant and labourer was only too ready to get some of his own back when he got the chance. The second is the 'goonda' element in every community which is always ready to take full advantage of such disturbances to practice arson, loot and dacoity.

2. The course of the disturbances

In the cities events followed the usual course, well known to us for many years, but attacks were fiercer, more sudden, and more savage than ever. In the rural areas attacks were launched by large mobs of Muslim peasants who banded together from several hamlets and villages to destroy and loot Sikh and Hindu shops and houses in their area. In some areas arson and loot were the main objects, and casualties inflicted on the Hindu-Sikh community were not great. In others savagery was carried to an extreme degree and men, women and children were hacked or beaten to death, if not burned in their houses. There were also quite a number of cases of forcible conversion of males and abduction of females. Having served for 34 years, mostly in the Punjab and with Punjab troops I would never have believed that agitation could have aroused the normally chivalrous and decent PM peasant to such frenzied savagery as was widely prevalent. Much of this savagery was undoubtedly deliberately intensified by the wildest rumours, the commonest of which was an impending attack by a large Sikh Army. It is interesting that on no occasion as far as is known has a second major attack been made

on any village or area in a village. The passion of the mob burns itself out and the survivors are generally left unmolested. There has also been a widespread desire to rid many areas of all Sikhs and Hindus, entirely for ever. Some former sites of houses have even already been ploughed up.

3. Police

Considering that they are about 90 per cent Muslim, I think that the police on the whole have done well. The Hindu-Sikh community, however, who have suffered will not accept this view except in a few exceptional cases. Their almost unanimous indictment is that the Police took no steps to defend or save them and they accuse them in many cases of having even directed and participated in the attacks. When Pandit Nehru drove out of the Refugee Camp after his visit the cry which went up from the multitude was 'Punjab Police Murdabad'. I had never heard this before. I fear that the police in the rural areas have shown partiality, but not to the extent of which they are accused by the refugees.

4. Junior Officials

Junior Officials are accused vehemently of the same partiality as the rural police, though there are some pleasing exceptions. Obviously they were powerless in most cases, and in others were probably affected by the surge of fanaticism around them.

5. Army

The Army has been steady and disciplined throughout. The rough proportion of troops employed is about 2/3 Hindu-Sikh and 1/3 Muslim. There have been a few cases reported of Muslim troops not acting with the energy and alacrity with which they should have done, and of Hindu-Sikh troops taking action against others than mobs or looters. Two special cases are under enquiry. The first is one of a Muslim officer with two platoons of 17 Rajput who is alleged to have withdrawn in front of a large mob at JHAND (CAMPBELLPORE district) without taking action; the second is of alleged terrorization by some Hindu-Sikh troops of 1/2 Punjab under a Sikh officer, in villages near Rawalpindi. If either of these stories can be proved to be true the officers concerned will of course be court martialled. I mention these cases with no intent to belittle in any way the magnificent behavior of the troops, but to show that such happenings are possible and in my opinion will increase as the entirely impartial influence of the British officer becomes less.

6. Pensioners and ex-Soldiers

The Districts affected are as heavily recruited as any in India. There is little doubt, I fear, that ex-soldiers and pensioners, some of the latter even including VCOs and Hon Commissioned officers, have been heavily involved in many areas. In others they did well and helped to save many of the minority communities. The forfeiture of pensions and grants of land in the bad cases should be as excellent deterrent.

7. Martial law

I have several times considered advising the imposition of Martial Law in Rawalpindi Division, and about the 10th March this was fully discussed between Major-Gen KEY and the Commissioner, DC and DIG Police. Maj-Gen KEY advised me that Martial Law was not required as the Army already had all the powers of action necessary, and the necessary restriction on the civil population could be imposed under the Punjab Ordinances. It was better to carry on action in support of the Civil authorities and Police than for the Army to take over control and be supported by the Civil authorities and Police. In effect the action taken would

be the same either way. If the Army took over control the rural police and junior civil officers would be apt to throw in their hands even more than they had already done, thinking that the responsibility had now been shifted. I agreed with this view.

Pandit Nehru and Sardar Baldev Singh obviously favoured Marital Law. Their main argument was the psychological factor which would undoubtedly have an effect both in the area of the disturbances and outside. There is a good deal in this argument but not enough, in my opinion, to have made the declaration of Martial Law advisable. There was another aspect which deterred me. This was primarily a political struggle. It was essential for the Army to take every possible step to restore law and order and to prevent arson, loot and murder. This it could do in support of the civil and police. But to declare Martial Law might only in the end make things worse, as it might appear, and be used as political propaganda, that Martial Law had been imposed and the Army used as an anti-Pakistan instrument.

The extra powers which have been imposed by the Punjab Government, or asked for by legislation at the Centre, are necessary in disturbances such as we have experienced to strengthen the hands of both the Civil and Military authorities. These are:

- a) Pensioners actively engaged in the disturbances, or not cooperating with Government to prevent them, to lose their pensions.
- b) Land grants of participants or non-cooperators similarly to be forfeited.
The above are already in force.
- c) Powers of arrest given to all military officers.
- d) Death penalty for arson, looting and murderous attacks.
- e) Collective fines on towns and villages involved.
- f) Abrogation of the Minimum Force principle.

These have not yet been promulgated.

8. Refugees in the Rawalpindi Division

Refugees in the Rawalpindi Division are likely to amount to some 40,000 homeless and largely destitute persons. This is a big problem. We are planning eventually to form camps to take the whole number at WAH and KALA (near JHELM). Other refugees, who may amount to about an equal number will either be persuaded to return to their homes or be absorbed in other Sikh-Hindu communities in towns or large villages. Some 4,000 have already been absorbed in RAWALPINDI city.

9. Prevention of outbreaks in other Districts of the PUNJAB

I have concentrated all available troops in the Punjab. Flag marches and patrols are being carried out widely wherever tension is greatest. But it must be clearly understood that such preventive action is only a palliative. We are dealing with the symptoms of disease, and cannot eradicate the disease by military action. The disease comes from the political leaders of all parties. The only complete cure is for them to come to some agreement. An agreement now between the Sikh and Muslim leaders would result in immediate peace in the Punjab. Failing this unlikely contingency the avoidance of provocative statements and the impressing on their followers of the necessity of avoiding bloodshed and protecting minorities is the only hope.

Lieut-General
General Officer Commanding-in-Chief
Northern Command.

39. 'Terrible Happenings in Punjab—League Coercing Minorities, Says J.P.'

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 22 March 1947

Lahore, 21 March.—'I find it hard to express my feelings at the terrible happenings in the Punjab. The tales of suffering and brutality that I have heard and the scenes of havoc and devastation that I have witnessed have overwhelmed me with horror and disgust. That men could be capable of such cruelty and bestiality I could not have found possible to believe but for the compelling evidence of facts,' says Mr Jaya Prakash Narayan in a statement issued by him regarding the Punjab disturbances.

All communities have suffered, the minorities in the Western districts of the Province being the worst sufferers and men of all communities have vied with one another in the race of communal fury. Yet, in this desert of inhumanity and barbarity there are cases too of humanity and brotherhood, and here too all communities have vied for the pride of place. It is these rare instances of fellowship and mutual help that point to a ray of hope in the prevailing darkness.

The development of recent events in the Punjab clearly indicate that the present disturbances were carefully planned and are part of a conspiracy to install the Muslim League in office as a step towards the final installation of Pakistan.

The events of the Punjab have once again brought home to me that if there is to be peaceful settlement of the Indian question, the British must quit here and now. Whatever be the attitude of the British Government, it is clear that the tin gods of the British bureaucracy find it hard to shed their imperialism. The longer these people remain the more mischief will they do.

Coming to ourselves in the Punjab, it seems we have not yet realized that we are faced now with realities and must settle our affairs among ourselves instead of running every time to the third party. The Congress has already invited the Muslim League to a discussion. The Muslim League, if it wants a peaceful settlement, must respond.

The question that underlies Punjab disturbances is whether the League wants to follow the path of negotiation and settlement or the path of intimidation and violence. Recent League propaganda in the Punjab shows that the League is determined to use force in order to secure its aims. If that is so there can be no settlement short of a civil war. The League must face this question squarely now and say if it is civil war it is preparing for. If it is not it must change the tenor of its propaganda and sit down around a table determined to find a solution. If after discussion no peaceful solution is found and if India has to be divided and divided peacefully the dividing must be based on the concept of the people concerned, that is, on the basic principle of self-determination—every territory being free to choose the political centre with which it should affiliate. This would inevitably mean the division of the Punjab and Bengal. If the League does not agree to this it can mean nothing else except that it wants to coerce the territories against their will to accept Pakistan. This cannot lead to anything but civil war. That is the clear issue and it is for the League to make up its mind.

In conclusion, I should like to say that there is danger at this moment that even sensible people in the Punjab should lose their head and that nationalism may be submerged by communalism. Already dangerous steps have been taken and unless the opposition to Pakistan is freed from communal feelings and interests and the Provincial Congress disassociates itself with them, there may be a political set back that will have reduced the work of half a century to naught. On the socialists of the Province particularly lies a heavy burden and isolated though

they may find themselves and threatened on all sides by the seas of communalism, they must stand firm and keep flag of freedom flying....

40. Directions for Observance of 'Punjab Day'

Letter from Ashutosh Lahiry, 22 March 1947
AIHM Papers, File No. C-150, NMML.

Dear Sir,

You are aware that the Working Committee of the All India Hindu Mahasabha has decided that the 30th March 1947, shall be observed as the All India Punjab Day throughout India. The full story of the ghastly tragedy that has been and is still being enacted in the Punjab and the North Western Frontier Province has not yet been revealed to the Public. It is obvious that not one but several 'Noakhalis' have taken place in the overwhelming Muslim majority areas of the North Western Districts of India. Loot, arson, rape, massacre and forcible conversions have taken place on an unprecedented scale and the fate of thousands of Hindus men, women, children are yet unknown.

In this tragic crisis, it is our imperative duty to do all that is possible to be done, to give succor and relief to the oppressed Hindus and Sikhs. You are requested to observe the day by holding meetings taking out processions and organizing such other demonstrations as local condition may permit. You shall also collect funds from the public and send all such collections either to Dr Gokul Chand Narang, Treasurer Punjab Relief Fund, Montgomery Road, Lahore, or to the undersigned at New Delhi.

Yours Faithfully,
Ashutosh Lahiry
General Secretary

41. Political Parties Responsible for Communal Flare Up

Letter from Shareef Mateen to M.A. Jinnah, 22 March 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, p. 366.

AMRITSAR

Dear Sir,

As it was feared, scores of cities and towns in the Punjab are in the grip of serious communal riots. Many innocent people have been done to death, while property worth crores of rupees has been destroyed.

The riots were very severe in Amritsar—in the commercial and political centre of the province. A large part of the city has been razed to the ground. The different communities have lost faith in each other. Life has become a constant worry.

The public is tired of such a way of life, but there seems to be no way out. On the other hand, the unsocial elements are getting on the top and misleading the people. They may try their hand at another flare-up.

It is not possible to narrate the tale full of woes in these few lines, nor is it our desire to do so. But we must draw your attention to the fact that the present riots are not the result of

some local trouble, nor are they due to another mosque or temple incident. It is the game of power-politics, as indulged in by the political parties in India, that is primarily responsible for the present flare-up. Till this is stopped there can be no real peace and the Peace Committees and others will function only on paper. The Congress-League agreement is the only safeguard against riots. It has become imperative for us to work for a peaceful future rather than shed tears over what has happened.

In my opinion, only a United Ministry can ensure peace and safety in the Punjab and can become the sound foundation for peace and unity in India. If the major political parties in India write [*sic*] on some such basis, they will have the whole-hearted support of the working class.

Pinning our faith to your great popularity and sagacity, we earnestly hope that you will leave no stone unturned to turn the tide in the country, thus saving it from the clutches of communal frenzy.

Yours faithfully,

SHAREEF MATEEN

President, District Trade Union Committee

Copy sent to J.B. Kripalani, President, INC.

G. UNITED PROVINCES

1. Call for Halting Communal Warfare

Extract from G.B. Pant's Speech at a Public Meeting in Hapur, 6 January 1947

Report from *National Herald* cited in B.R. Nanda (Ed.), *Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant*, Vol. XI, p. 94.

Addressing the meeting Pandit Pant said that he welcomed the criticisms of the policy of the Government. They did not disturb him. He revealed that leaflets protesting against his policy towards the Meerut riots were distributed at the AICC session at Delhi.

Pandit Pant deplored the outburst of communal frenzy which caused anguish and shame to all right-thinking men. He stressed the need of the utmost restraint on the part of every person. He said that Hindus and Muslims were descendants of common ancestors and, judged from any criteria, there was a community of race and descent running through them making them one nation. He made an impassioned appeal to both the communities to call a halt to fratricidal warfare.

Pandit Pant said that he was greatly moved by the reports of the Hapur riot. Hapur, one of the most important trade centres in India, suffered very heavy loss by the paralysis of its entire business for full 18 days.

Concluding, the Premier said that there could be no talk of freedom and progress in the absence of real amity and goodwill. The crying needs of social rehabilitation and economic reconstruction, which were the real objectives of any popular government, could not be fulfilled if all their efforts were consumed in maintaining law and order.



2. Riots in Allahabad

Extracts from G.B. Pant's Speech in the UP Legislative Assembly, 16 January 1947
B.R. Nanda (Ed.), *Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant*, Vol. XI, pp. 100–5.

...The heart of Allahabad is lacerated. The great and old town, its inhabitants, its history and its traditions have all been victims of a series of attacks inflicted by hooligans from time to time during the last 7 or 8 months. It is a matter of distress, anguish and agony to me that a city like that of Allahabad, which is the intellectual and cultural centre of our province, should have witnessed such ghastly tragedies and painful scenes. It is not for me to go into the origin of the trouble or to say how the start was made, or how the ball went on gathering momentum.... It is easy to blame the authorities in charge of law and order but does it really befit the self-respect of the citizens of Allahabad that they should have failed to maintain peace in their own city? After all, we are looking forward to the dawn of self-government and independence in our country and we will have to manage the affairs of over 7 lakhs of villages and thousands of towns and cities. Ultimately peace of the country as of every part of it will depend on the people of the land themselves. Citizens go on abusing those who have tried their best to save us against ourselves, to look after us while we were lost in a fit of frenzy and did not realize our own weak points, our own deficiencies and our own, if I may say so, foul tendencies. I think it is time we realized that we are expected to play a part in the defence of peace in our respective cities ourselves....in the circumstances I deplore what has been said against the authorities of Allahabad.

...So if we are determined to fight how is the poor Sub-Inspector to prevent us? If those who pretend to be enlightened and imbued with a high sense of responsibility make it impossible for him to maintain peace, it is no use blaming him for his failure to achieve what you must realize is your responsibility....

Now, Sir, coming to the events of the particular day with which we are concerned here, I should like honourable members to take into account what actually happened. A procession, I am told, of about 1000 Sikhs had started, and soon after it had started, trouble too started. There was first some sort of a quarrel between a boy—a Muslim boy—and a constable. This, I am told, was followed by an assault on a Sikh and later by a shower and rain of brickbats from roofs on the procession itself. Well, all this necessarily caused a great commotion there and this was followed by a certain amount of arson and people began to rush from the lanes and by-lanes. Imagine the situation that there are one thousand persons who are armed and equipped with swords. It is not our responsibility. It was said that this Government is responsible. They had got these swords not in our time, but many decades before that when we were the victims of a hostile system of administration here and had no hand or share in the management of the affairs of the province. If they had the swords the responsibility was not ours. It is what has been allowed to them by the Arms Act....Things of this sort have a great reflection. So very reckless could be the attitude of those who can have recourse to such methods even against a procession of this type! I am told that there were two Magistrates in it...with a section of the military police and a section of the Special Armed Constabulary at the tail of the procession, and one section of the military police, one section of the SAC, two GOC's, 3 inspectors, 8 under officers and 35 constables accompanied the procession. Then there were sentries posted on the roofs of the houses bordering on the road through which the procession did pass... If a procession like that, for the safe movement of which or the speedy progress of which such enormous precautions had been taken, can be attacked in this way how can any authority

maintain peace? This I would request honourable members to consider....Some shops were burnt and there were firings in that connection too. Then people rushed in from *galis*. The whole affair did not take more than 10 or 12 minutes and by the time the police could move from the tail end to the head the whole thing had almost taken its course. So, how can the police help a situation like that?...

Sir, I think it is time we learnt a lesson from all that has happened. We are told about the imposition of curfew. I ask the educated gentry and other responsible persons whether really they do not feel the pangs which one should feel when they think of the suffering that is being caused to the poor, to the starving people, by their recklessness? If they are unable to get food for hours, if they are unable to get water, who is responsible for it?...

3. UP Maintenance of Public Order Bill, 1947

Extracts from G.B. Pant's Speech in the UP Legislative Assembly, 13-18 January 1947

B.R. Nanda (Ed.), *Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant*, Vol. XI, pp. 109-34.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would urge the House to consider the Bill rather than the amendment moved to it and come to some concrete conclusion. The debate seems to be going on in a different direction. The last speaker, Maulvi Aziz Ahmad Khan, dealt with matters entirely unrelated to the Bill. What he said was that certain incidents had taken place in the province which had pained him, and that the Government had failed in taking preventive measures. I am really sorry for this lapse on the part of the Government and admit that there should be capability in us to check such riots. So long as we do not acquire that capability and people continue to suffer, it will remain a matter of regret for us. When precious lives are lost, no amount of grieving or consolation can be adequate. Such incidents cause us the acutest pain. If someone thinks that we are not affected by such incidents, he is devoid of all humanity and it is meaningless to say anything to him. If we have not been able to maintain complete communal peace in the province, one of the reasons for it is the kind of speeches that are delivered here. Such speeches are not conducive to creating a harmonious atmosphere which is our aim....

...Aziz Ahmad Khan Saheb has said so many things in his speech but not cited even a single instance of the authorities having misused powers. He emphatically said that riots took place at so many places. We do not deny that. It is also true that at several places Government servants were assaulted, which was only to be expected.... He has accused the Government of being a Hindu Government. But he must concede that this Hindu Government, in spite of great provocations, has not committed any excesses against the Muslims....the law has been used to control riots. As you may be aware, dozens of persons have been arrested and are still in jail. Arrests have been made in Agra, Kanpur, Varanasi and wherever a breach of peace was apprehended.... Because of these unsocial elements being behind the bars no riots are taking place now. Hence responsible persons should not give credence to garbled reports containing half-truths and half-lies.

The issue before the House has nothing to do with the Congress or Muslim League. The question is of maintaining peace in the province without which both the parties will be finished off. Hence this question should not be seen from a political standpoint. We are all Indians. It makes no difference whether we are Hindus or Muslims or Christians. The main question is whether we all realize that it is our duty to create such an atmosphere in the province that every

person can enjoy freedom. Unless such an atmosphere is created freedom has no meaning. Freedom does not mean licence to murder innocent people. I want you to consider the whole matter in the light of our duty in the present circumstances.

Some people say that if we adopt this Bill, it will bring a bad name to the Congress. Others say if the Muslim League does not oppose the Bill it will be weakened. But in my view both the parties will gain by adopting a right path, and we all must do whatever is right while strictly adhering to our principles.... Unless basic human values are recognized there can be no healthy politics. Hence let us concentrate on basic human values. As far as the Congress is concerned, even if it loses its popularity it will continue to work for the security of life and property of every Hindu and Muslim. It is the duty of the majority community to provide protection to a minority community. Hence it is our duty to look after the Muslims. Irrespective of political freedom, maintenance of peace is essential for the progress of society. Even after attaining political freedom, which is now imminent and nobody can stop it, if we want real freedom we should create an atmosphere of communal harmony and improve the lot of the poor. Mutual goodwill is indispensable for progress. Hence I request you not to treat this question as a political question. It has nothing to do with politics....

The objective of the Bill is to arrest persons guilty of indulging in activities likely to disturb peace, to foster amicable relations among the people, and to create conditions in which mutual relationship of different communities is not strained and people do not cut each other's throats....

...before giving a speech one should think what effect his words will have on his audience. It is not at all proper that leaders like Maulana Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru should be blamed for giving less rations to a particular class of labourers. Suppose I go around saying that Jinnah Saheb wants that the Hindus of Bengal should starve. What effect will it have on the people? People will believe that the Bengal Government is acting under the influence of Jinnah Saheb. You are free to criticize our policies, but you should not say things likely to lead to a breach of peace. Hence an order was issued for the arrest of Visaluddin Saheb. After that, Lari Saheb came to me and said that he was present at the meeting addressed by Visaluddin Saheb, and that he had not said the things attributed to him. Visaluddin Saheb also sent me a letter protesting against his arrest and claiming that he had always been working for Hindu-Muslim unity. So I ordered his release. Is this incident not a testimony to this that we want people to behave correctly and adopt a right path, and that nobody should be harassed unnecessarily?

You have every right to criticize the Congress. But I request you to judge this Bill solely from this viewpoint whether the conditions prevailing in the province call for such a legislation or not. We have to establish peace in the province....

You have also the right to demand the creation of Pakistan. But you should not make this demand on the ground that Hindus and Muslims are two separate nationalities. We have always lived together in villages and cities. If you say we are separate nationalities, what will be its result? I want to submit that we are all descendents of common ancestors. We have been living as neighbours for centuries and we could never wipe out each other. Hindus and Muslims have always been loyal to each other and have always relied on each other, if Pakistan is created it should be done in a manner in which two real brothers become separate without letting their mutual loyalty to each other be affected....

I did not want to talk of principles but I must say that it is not proper for any member to utter, while commenting on the Bill, things likely to arouse communal passion.... Doing so

does not help anybody. It is no use referring to the happenings of Garhmukteshwar and other places again and again....We are ashamed of those incidents. But must you go on rubbing it in? It does not do good to anyone and particularly to the Muslims....What we want is that Muslims should become strong and make progress....It is not at all proper to say that laws are made by us in order to weaken the Muslims. Regarding the proposed legislation, it has been said that a civilized Government should not enact such a law. I want to tell you that in Bengal there are such laws and ordinances that people can be kept in prisons for months and years. There, it is a Muslim League Government. But no Muslim leader has ever raised a voice against those laws. Had the Muslim League been earnest about its beliefs, it should have pressed for a judicial inquiry into the matter. The powers we are seeking through this Bill are much less—ten times, a hundred times, a thousand times less—than those enjoyed by the Bengal Government. But no one raised his voice against the Bengal Government. Rather our Bill is being criticized and it is being said that it is aimed against the Muslims....Maybe, in certain cases officials might have committed mistakes and exercised powers indiscreetly, and there may be legitimate grounds for complaints. But my contention is that there is no use going on dwelling on such matters ceaselessly. Instead of repeating the refrain that this is a Hindu Government which is bound to create communal bitterness, you should deal with specific cases....

As I told you, in Bengal the president of a District Muslim League has been sentenced to death because of his involvement in communal disturbances. In Karachi, 30 Muslim youths have been arrested for a most reprehensible act. In India, if we take action against some members of the Muslim League even on most legitimate grounds, you attribute it to our bias against the League. It is a very strange situation. It means whatever is done by members of the Muslim League, it should be beyond the purview of law. But the fact is that sometimes it becomes necessary to take action against them. Then, please tell me what the solution is? It can not be provided in the Bill that it will not be applicable to members of the Muslim League. Of course, if they do not contravene any of the provisions of the Bill, well and good. But if they do contravene, then being in the Government what is our duty?...We have to do everything to discharge our responsibilities well. Whoever indulges in undesirable activities, whether he is a Hindu or Muslim, whether he is connected with the Congress or Muslim League, if he is not restrained, peace may be affected. And the Government is duty-bound not to allow such things to happen.

I may tell you that at present communal passions are being aroused in certain parts of the country and when a man is driven mad by passion, he has to be tied with a rope lest he should kill himself or others. Sometimes one may have to bind one's own brother or relative or near and dear one however much may dislike to do so. Throughout the country we have to save people from communal violence.

...Anxious as I am to see that the law and order situation improves as soon as possible, I would be most pleased if in three months' time I could come before you and say that as the condition in the province had improved this legislation could be repealed. I do not want this law to be on the statute-book permanently. Had there been no extraordinary situation in the province we would not have tried to assume any special powers. Whatever our political views we have to live together, and I see no reason why we cannot have a common approach to problems relating to the law and order in the province. I have been told that several Congress members share the views of the opposition in regard to this matter. Maybe it is true. But at the same time it is also likely that some members of the opposition agree with the viewpoint of the

Government, but, because of the party whip, refrain from expressing their opinion freely.... When the situation improves we can all jointly repeal it, and then there will be no occasion for the opposition to scold the Government....It is our misfortune that today the political parties are so organized that, whatever the issue, they invariably adopt a communal attitude rather than political....When a Bill to curb communal riots is moved, it is opposed not on political grounds but on the plea that it is meant to harass members of a particular community. Such a tendency must be discouraged in spite of the fact that the opposition has the full right to oppose any Bill. I would request the members of the opposition to keep in mind that, while criticizing a Bill, nothing should be said which could aggravate the communal situation.

I have tried to accommodate as many amendments as possible....It has been said that the Bill does not offer complete solution of the problem. But no Bill can be perfect.... No law can be successful in this task unless we ourselves are determined to accomplish it. I assure you that we will spare no efforts to establish peace and communal harmony so that the province can make progress and the conditions of the poor can be alleviated by eradicating unemployment, illiteracy and poverty prevalent among them.

4. Hapur Riots

Report by Algu Rai, 19 January 1947

AICC Papers, File No. CL-10/ 1946-47, NMML (Translated from Hindi).

A description of the enquiry into the Communal Riots in Hapur, District Meerut (UP)

Background of the Hapur Troubles

The riot which took place on 6th November 1946 in Garhmukteshwar on the occasion of the Kartik Mela and before the Congress session at Meerut and a consequence of which the Muslims of Garhmukteshwar suffered heavy loss of life and property, continued for many days....

The news of the Garhmukteshwar riot reached Hapur—as a result the Muslims were resentful and unhappy. The Hindus could sense this. Tension increased on all sides—aggressive and defensive efforts were made on both sides....

A brief account of events from 13/12/46 to 19/12/1946

...a meeting of the Congress committee was going on when shouts were heard that there has been an attack, knives have been drawn, etc. People panicked. Lala Saray Prasad ji wanted to quieten the crowd, but their enthusiasm was out of control—there was a big crowd on the road—Lala Saray Prasad Ji went to the spot himself and asked Parmanand ji, Secretary, Town Congress Committee, to stop the crowd. Shri Parmanand ji reasoned with the crowd but it continued to advance—it was determined to proceed to the spot where Kailash had been stabbed. Parmanand ji continued to reason with the crowd—and eventually it agreed after going some distance, to not proceed further. A Hindu bank employee argued with Parmanand ji that ‘why don’t you Congress walas stop people in Noakhali, why do you stop people here, and other things.’...

Algurai

Secretary, Provincial Congress Committee, United Provinces.



5. 'Hapur Riot'

Report by Phool Singh, Secretary, United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee,
23 January 1947

AICC Papers, File No. CL-10/1947, NMML.

Garhmukteswar riot took place on 6th and 7th November 1946 in which many muslims were killed and their property looted. On the 9th November, 1946, the muslims of Shahjahan Pur and Dasna attacked the Garhmukteswar pilgrims on their way home. The Hindus in their turn retaliated by killing muslims of Harsaon and Indergarhi on the 10th of the same month. The following table shows the places in Meerut District where riots broke out along with the dates, the number of killed or wounded (whether Hindus or Muslims) the number of arrested and released on bail. The table B shows stray cases in Meerut District.

Hapur town is not very off from Garhmukteswar and is on the way to Delhi and the Punjab. The feelings in both the communities ran high and each began to take defensive and offensive measures. The sober minded people of course organized a peace committee as well which held sittings on 11th and 13th December, 1946. The last mentioned meeting was held at the house of Gulzar Ahmad proprietor Bone Mills. At this meeting one Ghaffar an irresponsible and mischievous muslim said that the big people cannot maintain peace unless men like him want it. The Sub-Inspector of Police and Tehsildar were also there. Even before 11th December certain events had happened which necessitated the calling of the meeting on that day. These events were:

1. One Suffi's brother was suspected to have brought two (Hindu) women from Calcutta as he pawned a gold Hansli which the Bangalees generally wear. The ladies were suspected to be in one of his houses but the Police Station Officer intentionally delayed matters and he is suspected to have connived at their removal to another place.
2. Between 9th and 11th one Pyare Lal was beaten at Bindis place—a muslim Halwai shop. A report was lodged with the Police. The President Town Congress also wrote to the Police but no action was taken.
3. The wife of Manu was also beaten the same day but no report was made.
4. A chamar girl was molested by Rahmat butcher. A report was lodged but the S.O. rebuked the father of the girl instead.
5. On 12th December, 1946, Manohar Lal Lohia Kabari's shop was set on fire.
6. On 13th December, 1946 some goondas wanted to molest Damodar Dass' daughter.
7. The same night at 7-45 p.m. Kailash a student got knife wounds in his hands and a lathi blow on his head.
8. In the meanwhile the bonds for keeping the peace executed by leading citizens in Hapur just after the Garhmukteswar riot were allowed to lapse and no fresh bonds were taken.
9. The news of Kailash being stabbed spread like wild fire and Hindus collected in large numbers and proceeded on Bulandshahr road. The Congress Committee people who were holding a meeting at that time tried their best to maintain peace. A few muslims were beaten on the Bulandshahr road. The Kishan Ganj is a Hindu Mohalla with 4 or 5 muslim houses. The muslims were safely evacuated. The Congress people also informed the District Magistrate on the phone about the gravity of the situation.

10. On the 14th at 8 a.m. the muslims attacked a few villagers who were bringing their carts into the city. Similarly Hindus attacked 2 muslims. But the former incident was not reported in the Thana while the later was. The police reported that the Hindus started the riot while Mr Algu Rai Shastri's report is to the contrary.

There was a free fight. The Bone Mill bugle was sounded and a number of Hindu villagers and muslims of the town prepared for a fight. The Supdt and Assistant Supdt Police tactfully handled the situation. The Muslims were the aggressors in Gally mohalla and on the cart men. The Hindus were the aggressors on the Robert Road, Burj Bazar and Kishan Ganj and Garhmukteswar road. Four muslims were killed, the body of two being burnt in a thatched cottage by the Hindus of a neighbouring village.

Rupees 2 lakhs has been imposed as collective fine on the Hindus including those Congress men who staked their all to stop the mischief. The villagers were also to pay the fine while those Muslims who started the mischief are left untouched. The local congress people demand:

1. Non-official enquiry into the whole affair.
2. Pending the enquiry the stay of the realization of fine which should be realized from those found guilty as a result of the enquiry.
3. Immediate enquiry against the Sub-Inspector Police.

Table A

Place	Date of riot	Number killed whether Hindu or Muslim	Injured	Arrested
1. Garhmuketswar Fair	6, 7 Nov.	47 Muslims	25 M	80 H
2. Town	7 Nov.	225 M & 5 H	25 M	150 H
3. Shahjahanpur	9 "	29 H	26 H	34 M
4. Dasna	"	50 H	10 H	23 M
5. Haraon	10th "	29 M	10 M	40 H
6. Indargarhi				
7. Hapur	13, 14 & 16 Dec.	4 M, 1 H	15 M 5 H	150 H
8. Baghara	22nd "	2 H	2 H	4 M

Table B

Stray Cases	Killed, Injured.
1. Rardhana Tehsil Mewana	20 H
2. Shahjahanpur Canal Bridge	1 H
3. Preshat garh	1 M
5. Ajrara Tehsil Hapur	5 M, 2 H
6. Mussuri	10 H
7. Tori	1 H
Sardhana Tehsil Sradhana	5 M 4 H
Pillana Tehsil Baghpat	4 M

The Hindu relief committee for the district consists of leading lawyers and other respectable people. The report about the Hapur relief committee is awaited.

Phool Singh,
Dated 23rd January, 1947. Secretary, UPCC.

6. Collective Fine Imposed on Non-Muslims of Hapur

Letter from Ratan Lal Garg to Jugal Kishore, 8 February 1947
AICC Papers, File No. G-10/1947, NMML.

Town Congress Committee
HAPUR

Dear Friend,

The resolution dated 21.1.47 of the Congress Committee, Hapur, advising the non-Muslims of Hapur to pay the collective fine imposed on them by the UP Govt was adopted under your assurance, as General Secretary, AICC to the deputation which waited upon you on behalf of the Congress Committee Hapur that an enquiry was already being held into Hapur Riot case by the Congress and that if it showed that the fine of two lacs imposed on the non-Muslims of Hapur was unjustified they would press upon the UP Ministry that it was refunded. Kindly expedite the aforesaid enquiry proceedings as the realization of this huge sum of fine has been causing great hardship on the Hindus of Hapur. An early reply is solicited.

Yours sincerely,
Ratan Lal Garg
Secretary,
Congress Committee, Hapur

7. 'Communal Situation in United Provinces'

Resolution Passed by the Working Committee of the All India Hindu Mahasabha at
New Delhi, 9 February 1947
AIHM Papers, File No. P-108, NMML.

'The Working Committee of the All India Hindu Mahasabha has noticed with regret that communal riots have been and are going on in the United Provinces for the last eight and nine months, as a result of which Hindus in spite of their being in majority have been the sufferers both in life and property. The Committee has also noticed that the Provincial Government has so far failed to check these riots.

In the opinion of the Committee the only reason of these riots continuing for such a long time is that, in that province Muslims, though, a minority of 16 per cent hold a virtual [*sic*] monopoly of service in the Police Department as they hold 76 per cent of the police services and besides the Minister in charge of the Police Department is a Muslim as a result of which the Muslims, got various direct and indirect support and encouragement from the police.

The Committee calls upon the United Provinces Government to stop further recruitment of Muslims in the Police services and the recently started Home Guards till such time as the number of Hindus attain the ratio according to their population in the province.'

(True Copy)

General Secretary,
All India Hindu Mahasabha, New Delhi.



8. Enquiry into Hapur Riots

Letter from Jugal Kishore to Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, 26 February 1947
AICC Papers, File No. G-10/1947, NMML.

My dear Kidwai Sahib,

I have just received a letter from the Secretary, Congress Committee, Hapur, regarding the resolution dated 21st January, '47 which the Hapur Congress Committee had passed regarding the payment of collective fine.

As I had advised them to pay up the fine, they have reminded me to approach you to set up an enquiry into the matter of Hapur Riot and to ascertain to what extent the Hindoos of that locality were responsible for the riot and whether the imposition of collective fine on Hindoos alone was justified by the events. You would perhaps remember your telling me that you would be setting up an enquiry not only for Hapur but for all such events in these Provinces. I do not know whether any enquiry has so far been set up. If it has not been done so far, I hope it will be done soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jugal Kishore
GENERAL SECRETARY.

The Hon'ble Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Sahib,
Minister, UP Govt
Lucknow

9. Payment of Collective Fine

Letter from Jugal Kishore to Ratan Lal Garg, 26 February 1947
AICC Papers, File No. G-10/1947, NMML.

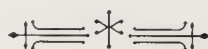
My dear Ratan Lal Ji,

I am in receipt of your letter dated 8th February. I am glad to know that the Town Congress Committee, Hapur, by a resolution, has advised the non-moslems of Hapur to pay the collective fine.

I have already written to the Home Minister, UP, reminding him of his proposal to set up an enquiry and requesting him to do so if it has not already been done, as early as possible. I do hope that the enquiry so set up will satisfy you.

Yours sincerely,
Jugal Kishore)
GENERAL SECRETARY.

Shri Ratan Lal ji Garg,
Secretary, Congress Committee,
Hapur.



10. Acharya Narendra Deva Questions Muslim League Ideology

Extract from a Speech by Acharya Narendra Deva in the UP Legislative Assembly, 13 March 1947

Report from the *Pioneer* cited in Hari Dev Sharma (Ed.), *Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Deva*, Vol. II, pp. 165–6.

Acharya Narendra Deo agreed with the Leader of the Opposition that the UP Assembly was not the proper forum for discussion of political issues. Still, the question of Muslims being a nation had been raised in the House and he would like to say something on it. He asked the League members to accept Mr Jinnah's definition that in Muslim majority provinces the Muslims were a nation while in Hindu majority provinces they were a subnation.

Addressing the League Party, he asked it to give up its tribal mentality and face the modern world. Any nation which was not prepared to make sacrifices for achieving independence, would not get freedom and even if it got it, it could not keep it.

He asked what sacrifices League had made in the fight for freedom. Its contribution was almost nil. The battle of India's freedom was fought by Congress in the past and it would be Congress which would make sacrifices in the future not only for the freedom of the Hindus but also of the Muslims.

The Muslim League was dreaming of establishing a theocratic state in India in an age of science. He advised the League to take lesson from the Muslim Middle East countries who had one by one given up theocratic form of Government and were marching with the times.

The Congress was the only organization which cut across communal and sectional boundaries and wanted to weld India into one common nation. Its objective was the good of all and not one section of the country....

11. '9 Killed: 14 Injured in Benares'

The Tribune, 15 March 1947

BENARES, 14 March.—Nine persons have died and 14 others have been injured till 10 a.m. to-day as a result of communal disturbances which broke out there last evening, says a communiqué issued by the District Magistrate, Benares, this afternoon.

The communiqué says: Disturbances took place in the city on the evening of 13 March in connection with the Arya Samaj procession. There was sporadic rioting in several localities and the police had to resort to firing near Chauk Police station. Curfew was promulgated from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. Unfortunately further rioting broke out on the morning of 14 March and by 9-30 a.m. rioting was reported from various quarters in the city. Up to 10 a.m. this morning the casualties reported are 14 injured and nine killed.

Curfew has, therefore, been promulgated from 10 a.m. on 14 March to 7 a.m. on 15 March, throughout the city with the exception of the Cantonment police station area. An order under Section 144, CrPC, prohibiting collection of five or more persons or the carrying of lathis and other dangerous weapons, has been promulgated for one month with effect from today. Curfew remains every night from 5-30 p.m. to 7 a.m. with effect from 13 March for a week.

The communiqué adds that arrangements will be made to conduct first and second class passengers arriving by night trains during curfew hours at the Cantonment Railway Station and requiring to go into the area covered by the curfew.—API.

Chapter 9. Demand for Partition

A. PUNJAB

1. The Case for a New Sikh-Hindu Province in the Punjab

Pamphlet by Gyani Kartar Singh, Undated
Rajendra Prasad Papers, File No. 2-B/47, NAI.

The Case for a Sikh-Hindu Province in the Punjab

**By
Gyani Kartar Singh
MLA (Punjab) and Member, Constituent Assembly of India**

I. Special Claims of the Sikhs in the Punjab

Historical:—Punjab is not only the homeland of the Sikhs but also their holy land. All their Gurus were born or brought up here, and almost all their important places of worship are located in this province.

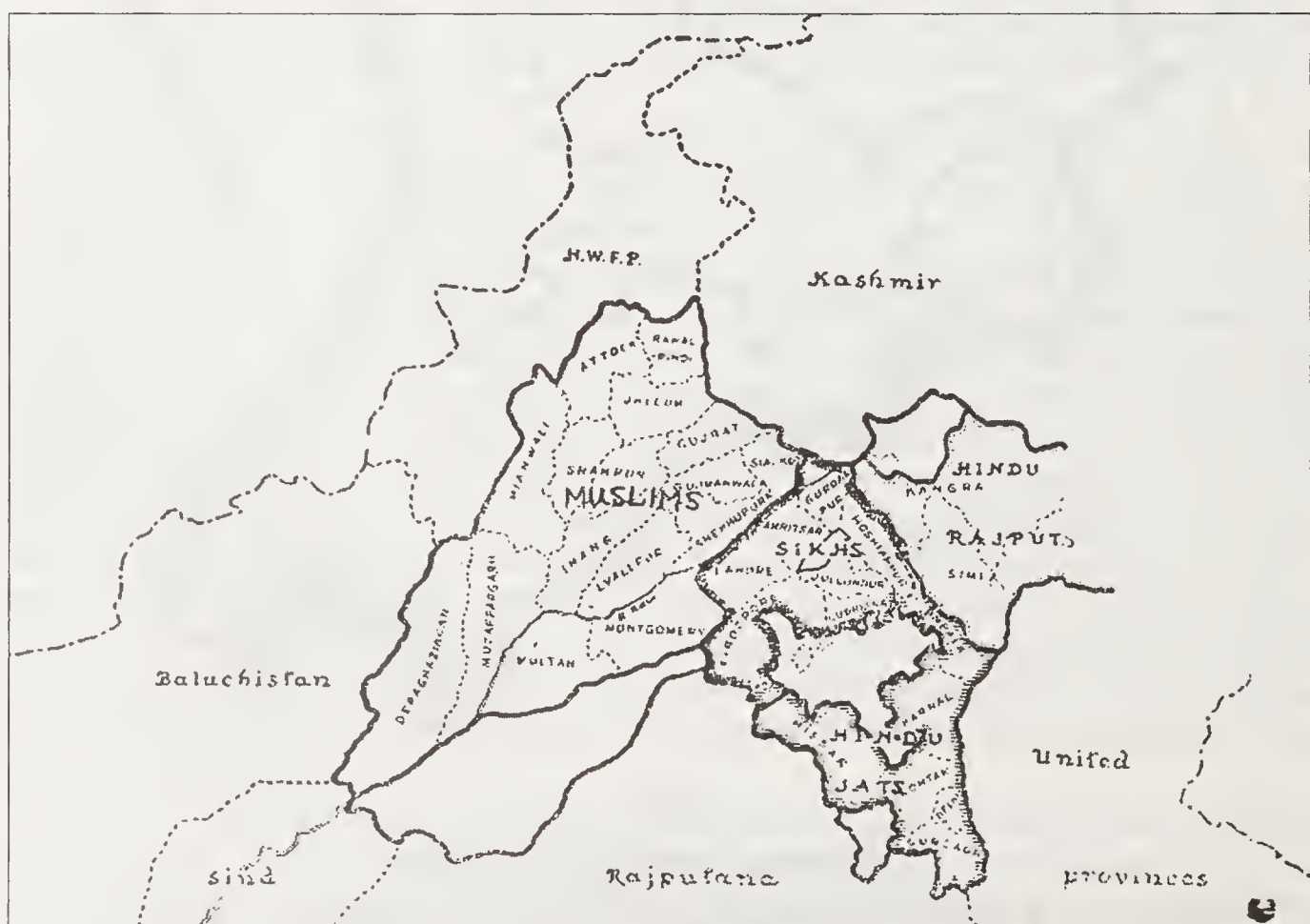
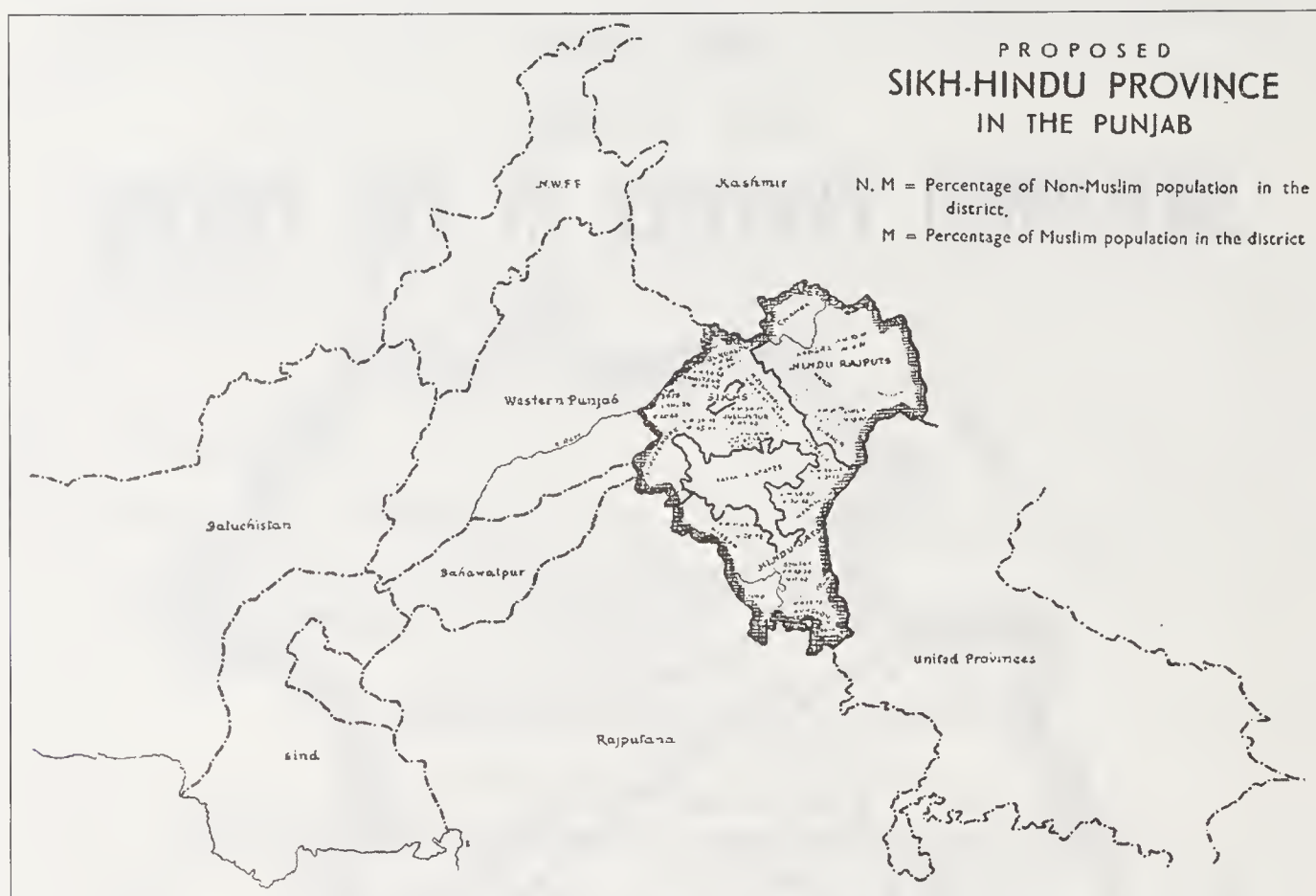
The founder of the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak, was born in 1469 A.D. It was a dark period in Indian history and northern India was being ravaged by invaders from the North, and corruption and misrule had reduced the Punjab to a state of utter misery. Guru Nanak achieved a synthesis of Islamic social democracy with Hindu idealism and created a new social order. His mission of goodwill was carried on by his successors who further enriched cultural life in the Punjab. Guru Nanak also evolved Gurmukhi and thus for the first time gave the Punjabi language a script. Guru Arjun built the temple at Amritsar which has become the metropolis of Sikh faith. Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa and made the Sikhs a martial nation, who became the mainstay of law and order in the Punjab after the disintegration of Mughal Power. Later on Maharaja Ranjit Singh founded a Sikh kingdom in the Punjab stretching into Kashmir and the North West Frontier of India. It was in this period that the tide of invasion was reversed and India began to invade the Pathan regions after many centuries. The Sikh State was lost to the British in the last century, largely due to the treachery of its generals and superior diplomacy of the British. The tussle, however, was so grim that in the words of the son of the then Governor-General 'another such engagement would shake the British Empire to its very foundation.'

Contribution During The British Period:—*During* this period the Sikhs have played an outstanding role in the history of the Indian Army, and even now they form about 10 per cent of its total strength. The large number of Victoria Crosses won by them in the two World Wars gives an idea of their valour and chivalry.

THE CASE FOR A NEW SIKH-HINDU PROVINCE IN THE PUNJAB



by
GYANI KARTAR SINGH,
M.L.A. (Punjab) and Member, Constituent Assembly of India.



Distribution of Muslim and Sikh-Hindu Districts in the Punjab

Nor have the Sikhs lagged behind in the struggle for Indian freedom, in which they have taken a leading part with characteristic zeal and fervour. The Ghadar Party of San Francisco provided many martyrs in the cause of freedom, and revolutionaries like Bhai Balwant Singh, Kartar Singh of Sarabha, Bhagat Singh and countless others adorn the pages of Indian history.

Place in the Economy of the Province:—*Sikhs are the best farmers in India and are in fact the only successful colonisers of new lands. By their hard work they have made the deserts of Montgomery and Lyallpore blossom into a peasant's paradise.*

On account of their capacity for hard manual labour and aptitude for mechanical work, they make fine industrial workers, mechanics and artisans, and will in fact form the working class of the future Industrial India.

Educationally also they are a forward community, and their percentage of literacy in the Punjab is 17 per cent, as compared with 16 per cent of Hindus and 6 per cent of Muslims. They have produced a larger number of able administrators, engineers and doctors.

The importance of the Sikhs, therefore in the economy of the Punjab is out of all proportion to their numbers.

Population And Its Distribution:—According to the census of 1941, the Sikh population in the Punjab is 50,69,240, out of which 37,57,401 are in British Punjab and 13,11,839 in the Punjab States. In the former, Sikhs are mainly concentrated in Central and Eastern Punjab in regions known as Majha, Malwa and Doaba. The Majha districts are Gurdaspur, Lahore and Amritsar; the Doaba districts are Jullundur and Hoshiarpur; and Malwa consists of Ferozepur, Ludhiana, Ambala and Sirsa Tehsil of Hissar district.

II. Muslim Claim of Pakistan

Punjab is being claimed as homeland by 'Paks' who consider it the pivot of their North West Pakistan. The unfortunate part of this claim is that it is being made by people, many of whom have neither homes nor lands in the Punjab. Maps are being drawn arbitrarily by schemers who conveniently ignore the presence of Sikhs and Hindus in the Central, Eastern and Southern Punjab. In the fourteen districts of British Punjab, between Jumna and Ravi, which form a compact and contiguous area, the Sikhs, Hindus and other non-Muslims number 89,25,537 out of a total population of 1,43,96,805, that is, 62 per cent. Again, there are six Sikh States which have played a distinguished role in the defence of the country and to which Sikhs are bound by inseparable ties of religion and history. There are also small but numerous Hindu Rajput States in this region. Are they all to be handed over unceremoniously to the proposed Pakistan?

The Sikhs have already expressed their views emphatically and clearly on this point. At the All India Akali Conference held at Attari on 12th February 1940, they passed a resolution viewing with deep concern the growing endeavours of League Muslims to convert the Punjab into a part of Pakistan, and decided to resist such a demand by all possible means. They have since, reiterated this resolve on a number of occasions. The Hindus of this area in particular of Ambala Division, have also taken a similar view in the matter and are pressing for the creation of a separate Haryana Province.

The position of the Sikhs in the Punjab is similar to that of Muslims in the whole of India. If Muslims cannot view with equanimity the Hindu domination in the Central Government, the Sikhs cannot acquiesce in Muslim domination of the Punjab, particularly in Central,

Eastern and Southern Punjab, where they, along with the Hindus, are in an overwhelming majority. The Sikhs have always expressed their opposition to the Muslim League claim for the vivisection of India on religious basis, but since the substance thereof has been conceded, in the form of Groups B and C, by the Cabinet Mission Plan of 16th May, the Sikhs along with the Hindus demand that the Central, Eastern and Southern portion of the Punjab, where they are in majority, be separated from the North and Western Punjab and constituted into a new Province, so as to give the Sikhs and Hindus of the Punjab a homeland where they will work out their destiny according to their genius. The proposal for the partition of the Punjab is a concrete demand which has the backing of the Sikh community, who desire that it should be implemented forthwith.

III. Cabinet Mission Plan and Its Grave Injustice to the Sikhs and Hindus of Punjab

According to this plan there will be a three tier system of Government—the Centre, the Groups and the Provinces. Grouping has been devised to safeguard Muslim interests, and in the words of the Cabinet Mission ‘to remove the very genuine and acute anxiety of the Muslims that (in a unitary form of Federal Government) they would find themselves subjected to a perpetual Hindu Rule, and to assure them a control in all matters vital to their culture, religion and economic or other interests.’ At the Union Centre, which will deal with all Indian subjects like defence, foreign affairs, and communications, Muslims have been given the following safeguard:

Any question raising a major communal issue in the Legislature should require for its decision a majority of the representatives present and voting of each of the two major communities as well as a majority of all the members present and voting.

It will thus be observed that all possible safeguards have been provided for the Muslims.

No similar provisions, however, have been made to protect the interests of the Sikhs in the Punjab and Group ‘B’, though they have been recognized as one of the three main communities in India, having special interests in the Punjab. The result is that, though along with the Hindus they form an overwhelming majority in a compact and contiguous area, they will, if left as they are, always find themselves, both in the Province and Group B subject to the ‘brute’ majority rule of the Muslims.

It may be argued, that the non-Muslims interest will find a safeguard in the Union Centre wherein they will be in a permanent majority. But in the first place the Muslims, as pointed out above, have been given a virtual veto in all communal issues which may arise at the Centre, and secondly it will be the Groups and the Provincial Governments which will actually govern matters of vital interests to individuals and communities, namely, law and order, agriculture and industries, trade and commerce, local bodies, education, health, civil rights, and others. The Central subjects are but three in number, and do not affect the day to day life of most of the people.

Grouping under the Cabinet Mission Plan has religion for its basis. That is why NWFP, Sind, Baluchistan and Punjab having different languages, economic interests, historical background and outlook have been grouped together. This being the case it is not understood why the Sikh–Hindu majority residing in a contiguous area in South-East Punjab has not been similarly treated.

Under the Cabinet Mission Plan, as understood by a large majority of the people of this country, it was provided that ‘Provinces should be free to form groups with executives and

legislatures'. If this had been the case, there was some hope that Groups B and C, with permanent Muslim majorities, would after all not be formed, as the NWFP and Assam had expressed their opposition to their formation. This hope, however, has now been set at nought by the latest declaration of the British Government made on 6th December 1946, that the decision to form Groups would not be taken by Provinces individually but by Sections as a whole by a bare majority vote. Not only this, the Sections, on the same principle, have been given the right to frame Provincial Constitutions as well. This in fact means, judging from the present temper of the Muslim League, a virtual dis-enfranchisement of all non-Muslim representatives in Sections B and C for purposes of framing Group or Provincial Constitutions.

The Provision in the Cabinet Mission Plan enabling Provinces afterwards to opt out of Groups is illusory, because the Muslim League majorities in Sections B and C can so manoeuvre Provincial Constitutions as to make opting out impossible. Even this inadequate provision to opt out of Groups does not exist for areas in Punjab and Bengal, where non-Muslims are in a clear majority, for this right can only be exercised by Provinces as at present constituted.

It is thus clear that the interests of non-Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal have been ignored, and there are no prospects of a fair deal being meted out to them in Sections B and C, as now proposed to be worked by the British Government. Their case qua these sections, it may be pointed out, is exactly similar, in fact stronger, than that of Muslims qua the whole of India, as they constitute 43 per cent and 45 per cent of the total population of the Punjab and Bengal, whereas the Muslims constitute only 24 per cent of the total population of India.

IV. Solution

The non-Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal should be granted the same autonomy which has been given to the Muslims in relation to the whole of India, namely, the right to form autonomous Groups in areas where they are in a majority. This means that contiguous areas in the Punjab and Bengal, where the non-Muslims are in a clear majority, should be formed into separate autonomous Provinces. Such a step was taken in Ireland in 1911 when the boundaries of Ulster were revised and the three Catholic Counties excluded from its area and joined to the Catholic South. A similar step in the case of Punjab and Bengal will be widely welcomed by their non-Muslim population and will not be contrary to their wishes or interests as stated by the Cabinet Mission. On the other hand, they will strongly resent and resist the imposition of Provincial and Group Constitutions framed against their wishes by Muslim majorities in Sections B and C. The proposed autonomous non-Muslim Provinces in the Punjab and Bengal should be given the freedom to join any of the Groups A, B or C.

It has been suggested in certain quarters that the contiguous areas in Punjab and Bengal, where the non-Muslims are in a majority, should be formed into sub-provinces, on the analogy of the sub-province of Croatia in pre-war Hungary and Ulster under the Government of Ireland Act 1920. The latter experiment was never tried and Croatia formed an uneasy partner of pre-war Hungary. Moreover, there are three objections to this proposal. Firstly, the sub-provinces will be subject to the Muslim majorities of Punjab and Bengal. Secondly, in the proposed three tier system of Indian Government, they will form the fourth tier and, after the appointment of Central, Group and Provincial subjects, will hardly have any important subjects left with them and will thus be no better than glorified local bodies. It may here be mentioned that the sub-provinces of Croatia and Ulster formed the third tiers in their systems of Government and, therefore, had powers and functions similar to those enjoyed or to be entrusted to Provincial

Governments. Thirdly, the sub-provinces in Bengal and Punjab, will not have the right to opt out of their respective Groups under the Cabinet Mission Plan of 16th May. This is, therefore, not a practical or satisfactory solution.

V. The Proposed Province in the Punjab

This will consist of Ambala and Jullundur Divisions and Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Lahore Districts. The total population of the proposed Province, according to the census of 1941, will be 144 lakhs, of which 62 per cent will be non-Muslims, mainly consisting of Sikh and Hindu Jats, who are closely akin to each other in race and culture. The composition of the population, by communities, will be 19 per cent Sikhs, 38 per cent Muslims and 43 per cent Hindus and others. No single community, therefore, will be in an absolute majority and in a position to dominate the rest. Each will have an effective voice in the administration of the proposed Province. The position of the Sikhs will be further improved, if the Sikh States decide to coalesce with it at a later stage.

In economic and financial resources also, the proposed Province will be self-sufficient and compare well with many of the existing Provinces of India. It will include within its boundaries the rich and fertile tracts of Majha, Malwa, Doaba, and the Ambala Division with its bright future prospects when the Bhakra Dam Scheme materialises. It will also contain important commercial and industrial centres like Lahore, Amritsar, Jullundur and Ludhiana.

VI. Sikh and Hindu Minorities in North West Punjab

The interests of these minorities, particularly of Lyallpur, Montgomery, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Sheikhupura and Rawalpindi districts, have not been forgotten. Nor has the question of Gurdwara Nankana Sahib and other Gurdwaras and places of worship been overlooked. The proposed Sikh-Hindu Province will be a bulwark of strength to them, and there are certain other proposals in view which will satisfactorily solve their problem, of which the writer is fully conscious.

VII. Conclusion

It is strongly urged that steps should be taken forthwith to form the proposed autonomous Sikh-Hindu Province in the Punjab, to allay the genuine fears and apprehensions of the large non-Muslim population residing in this area.

If this just demand is not conceded, it will mean the ruin of the Hindu martial, as well as commercial, classes under the permanent domination of those who believe in their being a separate nation. Similarly the Sikhs, 95 per cent of whose world population resides in the Punjab, will become politically extinct. A people, who not a hundred years ago, were rulers of this land, would become subservient to those whom they had conquered and ruled. This is unjust, unfair and preposterous and shall not be permitted. Therefore:

By the right of self determination,

By the right of majority,

By the inherent right of a culturally homogeneous people to live their own life, the division of the Punjab is absolutely essential.¹

¹ Appendix I & II not reproduced here.



2. 'Plan for New Province in Punjab'

Extract from an Article from *The Hindustan Times*, 8 January 1947.

(By Our Special Correspondent)

A plan for the formation of an autonomous Sikh-Hindu province in the Punjab to 'secure elementary justice to the large non-Muslim population residing in this area and allay its genuine fears and apprehensions' is put forward by Gyani Kartar Singh, MLA (Punjab) and Member, Constituent Assembly.

Pointing out the special position occupied by the Sikhs in the Punjab, Gyani Kartar Singh writes 'Educationally they are a forward community and their percentage of literacy in the Punjab is 17 as compared with 16 of Hindus and 6 of Muslims. They have produced a large number of able administrators, engineers and doctors.'

Commenting on the Muslim League demand that the Punjab should be included in Pakistan, Gyani Kartar Singh continues, 'Maps are being drawn arbitrarily by schemers who conveniently ignore the presence of Sikhs and Hindus in the Central, Eastern and Southern Punjab. In the fourteen districts of British Punjab, between Jumna and Ravi, which form a compact and contiguous area, the Sikhs, Hindus and other non-Muslims number 89,25,537 out of a total population of 1,43,96,805, that is, 62 per cent. Again, there are six Sikh States which have played a distinguished role in the defence of the country and to which Sikhs are bound by inseparable ties of religion and history. There are also small but numerous Hindu Rajput States in this region. Are they all to be handed over unceremoniously to the proposed Pakistan?...

'It is strongly urged that steps should be taken forthwith to form the proposed autonomous Sikh-Hindu province in the Punjab.

'If this just demand is not conceded, it will mean the ruin of the Hindu martial as well as commercial classes under the permanent domination of those who believe in their being a separate nation. Similarly, the Sikhs, 95 per cent of whose world population resides in the Punjab, will become politically extinct.'

3. 'Punjab and the Sikhs'

Editorial from *The Hindustan Times*, 9 January 1947.

Gyani Kartar Singh, a member of the Constituent Assembly and a prominent leader of the Sikh Panth, has made the interesting suggestion that the communal problem of the Punjab may be satisfactorily solved by dividing the province into two, in one of which the Muslims will be in a majority and in the other the non-Muslims. According to his proposal the Ambala and Jullundur divisions and Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Lahore districts containing a population of 144 lakhs will be made into an autonomous province and the rest of the Punjab containing nearly an equal population will become another province in which the Muslims will form an overwhelming majority. He has said that 'the proposal for the partition of the Punjab is a concrete demand which has the backing of the Sikh community who desire that it should be implemented forthwith.'

It is a pity that the Sikhs did not formulate this proposal while the Cabinet Mission was here. At that time, they insisted that the Punjab should not be divided, lest the Sikh community should find itself dismembered. They were content with some special safeguards guaranteed by

a Central Union Government. It is true that the present demand for a partition is a reaction to the proposal for Grouping. The Sikhs who are four millions and constitute 14 per cent of the Punjab will be reduced to 11 per cent in the North Western Group contemplated in the Cabinet Mission plan. This reduction of status combined with the existence of two Governments in both of which the Muslims will be a dominant majority is naturally calculated to alarm the Sikhs regarding their future. Better results may, however, be achieved by dividing the present Punjab into three parts. In the seven districts of Amblala, Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, Simla and Kangra, the Hindus are 39.4 lakhs out of a total of 56 lakhs. The Muslims will be only 22 per cent while the Sikhs will be in a negligible minority of 2.5 lakhs. On the other hand, in the 17 North-western districts of the Punjab, Muslims will have a 75 per cent majority. It is in the six districts of Jullundur, Ludhiana, Ferozepore, Hoshiarpore, Amritsar and Gurdaspur that no community is in a majority. Their total population of 71 lakhs will consist of 30.8 lakhs Muslims, 21.5 lakhs Sikhs and 16.3 lakhs Hindus. This is the tri-communal area of the Punjab for which a special constitution preventing domination by any one community can be devised. In order, however, that this division may be acceptable to the Muslims, the new Hindu and tri-communal provinces of the Punjab must voluntarily agree to go into the North-Western Group and co-operate in the evolution of a proper Group constitution which will preserve and extend to the other provinces of the Group all the present advantages of a united Punjab while securing to the Hindu and Sikh populations a valuable measure of autonomy. In the Group as a whole, the Muslim will be in a majority, and they will, therefore, have nothing to fear by the new rearrangement. At the same time, the present bitter conflict due to a bare Muslim majority in the present province of Punjab would be amicably resolved.

The Cabinet Mission plan is based on the integrity of the existing provinces. So any kind of arrangement of boundaries can be undertaken only on the basis of the consent of all the parties concerned. If the Sikhs are earnest about securing a position of equality with the other two communities in the region where they are most concentrated, they should revise their plan on a rational basis in the interest of the object they have in view. If this is done, we do not think the Congress will raise any objection even to the Grouping. A similar approach to the problems of Bengal and Assam may prove to be the most practicable solution of the present differences between the Congress and the League. The Hindus of Bengal and Assam may waive their objection to the North-Eastern Grouping if the 11 districts of Bengal in which the Hindus are in a majority can be constituted into an autonomous province which, as well as Assam, will be given an honourable status within the Group. In the Punjab and Bengal, it is the possibility of a double domination both in the province and the Group, that is the root cause of opposition. Whatever agreement there may be regarding the procedure to be followed in the Sections, no constitution which enforces this double domination over millions of unwilling people can function. Just as the limitation of Union subjects and the vesting of all other subjects including residuary powers in the provinces was considered the best way of reconciling the need for Indian unity with Muslim apprehensions of cultural domination, a sub-division of the Punjab and Bengal so as to give the Hindus and the Sikhs effective cultural autonomy while preserving the economic unity of these regions may be the best way to reconcile the conflict between Grouping and provincial autonomy.



4. Demands for Adequate Safeguards

Telegram from Basant Singh to J.B. Kripalani, 10 January 1947
AICC Papers, File No. G-17 KWI/1946, NMML.

INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT

LAHORE 4 22 ACHARYA KRIPLANI CONGRESS PRESIDENT NEW DELHI

FULFIL CONGRESS COMMITMENTS AND ASSURANCES FOR ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS FOR SIKHS = BASANT
SINGH SECRETARY PRATINIDHI PANTHIC BOARD AMRITSAR =

5. 'League to Blame if It Does Not Enter Constituent Assembly'

The Tribune, 18 January 1947

From Our Special Representative

LAHORE, 17 Jan.—'In the event of the Muslim League not agreeing to come into the Constituent Assembly even now, the Sikhs would support the Indian National Congress in whatever line of action it may decide upon to take so far as the work of the Constituent Assembly is concerned.' Thus observed the two Sikh representatives in the Constituent Assembly, Sardar Ujjal Singh and Giani Kartar Singh, President of the Shiromani Akali Dal in the course of their talk with pressmen at a social gathering at the 'Stiffles' this evening. The function had been arranged in their honour by Sardar Harcharan Singh Bajwa, a prominent Akali leader and this provided an opportunity to the Akali leaders to express their views on the question of their attitude towards the future of the Constitution Assembly and their own demands regarding the right of veto in matters affecting the Sikhs, a right similar to the one which the British Cabinet Mission has given in their statement of 16 May to the Hindus and the Muslims who have been described as the two of the four major minorities—the other two being the Sikhs and the Scheduled Caste.

The two Akali leaders contended that even though they wished so much that the Congress had not passed its Delhi Resolution of 6 January, 1947, yet they were not going to withdraw their co-operation which they had decided upon to give to the Congress in the Constituent Assembly. They had been co-operating with the Congress and they would continue giving that co-operation.

League Will Be at Fault

Sardar Ujjal Singh and Giani Kartar Singh maintained that the Muslim League should join the Constituent Assembly now and one expected that it would do so, so that the historic Constituent Assembly may as a result of the joint efforts of all evolve an agreed constitution of India. If, however, the League would not decide to come into the Constituent Assembly even now it will be their fault and not of the Congress at all. League had been given sufficient time and opportunity to reconsider their position and the work of the Constituent Assembly must therefore, now proceed when it reassembles on 20 January. The work before the Constituent Assembly said the two speakers when it re-assembles will be, the consideration of Pandit Nehru's resolution, the formation of the Minorities Advisory Committee, Steering Committee, and Union Powers Committee. The Constituent Assembly had already waited for 'absent friends' to come even though every one wanted to proceed uninterrupted with the task of the Constituent Assembly.

Sikhs' Claim

The two Sardars referring to the Sikhs' position asserted that the Sikhs wanted for themselves a similar 'right of veto' so far as the matters affecting them were concerned as had been given to the Hindu and Muslim minorities. By this right of veto, as it had been described, nothing more was being asked than that 'nothing affecting the Sikhs should be decided upon without the consent of the Sikhs themselves.' This right, they were asking to be given to the Sikhs in the Punjab and N-WFP section even though they would not insist upon such a right being given to them so far as the Centre was concerned. That right of veto, maintained the two Sikh leaders, must be given to the Sikhs before it is decided that the Sections should sit separately.

Both of them reviewed hurriedly the sequence of events which led to the lifting of the boycott by the Sikhs of the Constituent Assembly and pointed out that it was in view of the assurances given to them by the Congress and its leaders, by the Secretary of State and Sir Stafford Cripps that the Sikhs ultimately decided to give a trial to the Constituent Assembly and decided to enter it. Their position was that they were there so far as they were able to safeguard the Sikh rights and claims in the constitution-making. They, however, made it clear that in case they are not able to secure the Sikh rights and claims which at present was the getting of the 'right of veto', they would stand by the resolution of the Panthic Pratinidhi Board, whose directive was to withdraw from the Constituent Assembly in that event.

How to Resolve Deadlock

Giani Kartar Singh who was fully supported by Sardar Ujjal Singh added that they had been told, and rightly so, that communal deadlocks might be created as a result of the veto power given to the major minorities. In order that such communal deadlocks may be resolved, said the two Akali leaders, they were prepared for any machinery being set up even now which could be employed for the purpose of resolving the deadlock when and if one is created. In this connection they referred to the method of arbitration being one form of the machinery for such a purpose and they said that the Sikhs would be willing to abide by any decision made either by the Arbitration Board or any other machinery which might be set up by the Constituent Assembly.

Minority Advisory Committee

The two Sikh representatives in the Constituent Assembly explained their second demand which they said, must be conceded also. This demand was that in the Minorities Advisory Committee the Sikhs who were one of the four Major Minorities should be given their full representation. By 'full representation' the Sikh leaders meant—'almost equal representation.' This 'full representation' was further explained by the Sikh leaders as being nine or ten Sikhs in an Advisory Committee of 50 which number they visualized would be the number of the Minorities Advisory Committee.

In this connection while asking for 'full representation' for the Sikhs the two Sikh leaders made a very important and significant suggestion when they said that the President of the Minorities Advisory Committee should be a person of a very high and commanding personality. In this connection when they were asked if they could name any such person, they said that they would like that the President of the Minorities Advisory Committee should be a person of the highest integrity like Mahatma Gandhi?

A journalist: Is there any other person of the highest integrity like that of Mahatma Gandhi.

The two Sikh leaders replying said: that they wanted to suggest the name of Mahatma Gandhi himself for being made the chairman of the Minorities Advisory Committee whose appointment as such would result in the solution of many difficulties.

6. Sikhs Demand Safeguards in Face of Muslim Domination

Record of Henderson's Conversation with Tara Singh, 19 January 1947
TOP, Vol. IX, p. 513.

Stated that the Sikhs had strong fears of Muslim domination. They desired some safeguard in Section B such as had been provided at the Centre in respect of major communal differences. Sikhs would then willingly co-operate in the work of the Section. I asked him whether if no such safeguard was given whether they would refuse to enter into the Section. He said that it was doubtful that they would, although they might take a decision to enter the Section in order to state their case reserving their freedom to leave subsequently.

He stated that if British bayonets were not here the Sikhs would revolt and seek to prevent Muslim domination by seeking control of the Province themselves.

They might as an alternative by the use of force agree to the division of the Province, but only as a last solution. Provided there was no risk of Muslim domination they preferred to keep the Province as at present constituted, but this [was] dependent, as he had already stated, upon the provision of adequate safeguards, and required inter-communal co-operation. If the safeguard for which they asked were given, they would willingly co-operate with the other communities in running the Provincial administration.

He indicated the possibility of a visit to England in order to put the Sikh case to the British public.

7. Hindus and Sikhs to Oppose Pakistan Together

Resolution Passed by the Working Committee of the All India Hindu Mahasabha,
8 March 1947
AIHM Papers, File No. C-155, NMML.

A meeting of the Working Committee of the All India Hindu Mahasabha was held on 8th March 1947 at Hindu Mahasabha Bhawan, Reading Road New Delhi, at 3-30 p.m. under the Presidentship of Sree L.B. Bhopatkar.

The following members were present:

(1) Sree L.B. Bhopatkar, (2) Mr N.C. Chatterjee, (3) Mr B.G. Khaparde, (4) Sjt R.A. Kanitkar, (5) Pt Ram Nath Kalia, (6) V.G. Deshpande, (7) Mr D.N. Mukherjee, (8) Sree Ashutosh Lahiry, (9) Sree Inder Prakash, (10) Lala Narayan Dutta, and (11) Mr N. Panchanatham.

The Committee discussed for four hours the implications of the announcement made by the His Majesty's Government on 20th February '47 and ultimately a Committee was formed consisting of Mr N.C. Chatterji, Sjt B.G. Khaparde, Sree Ashutosh Lahiry, Sjt V.G. Deshpande and Sree Panchanatham to draft a resolution on the subject. The Committee adjourned till 10 a.m. on the 9th March '47.

The Working Committee reassembled on 9th March '47 at 10 a.m. and sat for two hours. Besides the general political situation the Committee also considered the Punjab situation and ultimately the following resolutions were adopted:

'PUNJAB RESOLUTIONS':

1. This meeting of the Working Committee of the All India Hindu Mahasabha noted with grave concern the province wide riots in the whole of Punjab resulting in massacre of Hindus and Sikhs in large numbers and immense loss of Hindu and Sikh property worth several crores of rupees. This meeting further notes that these riots were brought about by a combination of the Agents of the Bureaucracy and Muslim League in order to terrorize the Hindus and Sikhs so that they may give up their agitation against Pakistan. The Working Committee learnt with pain that the Police which is predominantly Muslim in character has shown communal bias and has been responsible for the numerous innocent Hindus and Sikhs. The Punjab Government having failed to discharge its primary obligation of maintaining peace and order and of giving adequate protection to the minorities the Working Committee calls upon the Central Government to intervene and take the necessary steps to suppress lawlessness and to prevent its further spread.
2. The Working Committee congratulates the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab for having built up a common Anti-Pakistan Front sinking all difference of opinion and creeds and assures them of its whole-hearted support in their struggle against Pakistan.
3. The Working Committee calls upon the Hindus and Sikhs of India to observe the 23rd of March as the Punjab Day as a mark of their sympathy with the sufferings of the Hindu and Sikh brethren of Punjab and request the Provincial Sabha to take necessary steps in this direction.

The Working Committee of the All India Hindu Mahasabha is of opinion that except for the statement that the transference of power to responsible Indian hands will be effected by a date not later than June 1948 the whole of the announcement of His Majesty's Government of 20th February is vague and is likely to lead to unrest and strife in India. The recent announcement militates against the previous statement and declarations of the British Statesmen to keep intact the geographical integrity of India, the finding of the Cabinet delegation that there is almost universal desire for the unity of India and His Majesty Government's avowed declaration of its intention not to allow a 'minority to place their veto on the advance of the majority'.

This Working Committee calls upon His Majesty's Government to transfer power and responsibility to a strong and independent Central Government which can effectively control the destinies of whole of India (Akhand Hindusthan).

The declaration of His Majesty's Government that the differences among Indian parties 'are preventing the Constituent Assembly from functioning as it was intended that it should' that it is the essence of the plan that the Assembly should be fully representative and that His Majesty's Government had agreed to recommend to Parliament a constitution worked out in accordance with the proposals made therein by a fully representative Constituent Assembly imply that His Majesty's Government will not be prepared to recommend to Parliament any constitution drafted by the present Constituent Assembly. The Working Committee consider that in making these statements His Majesty's Government are pursuing the old Imperial policy of keeping India divided and these statements and their implications give a direct

incitement to those who are putting obstacles in the way of India in achieving her freedom by deliberately keeping out of the Constituent Assembly. The qualifications and restrictions put by His Majesty's Government are calculated to impede the transfer of power in a peaceful and orderly fashion from Britain to India.

The Hindu Mahasabha is strongly and categorically opposed to the alternative envisaged by the Cabinet declaration, namely, transfer of powers to the Provincial Governments with regard to areas which are not now fully represented in the Constituent Assembly owing to their own perversity. His Majesty's Government's statement is a definite encouragement to the Muslim League to stay out of the Constituent Assembly. The League is indirectly assured of getting Sovereign Pakistan States in the Muslim majority provinces. This is a direct incitement to disruptionists to persist in the unreasonable attitude of continued non-co-operation in the constructive effort of constitution making for the whole of India.

The Hindu Mahasabha appreciates the wisdom of the Rulers of those Hindu States who have expressed their concurrence to participate in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly in spite of all incitement to the contrary.

This Working Committee urges the Constituent Assembly to courageously proceed with the completion of their task and to frame a constitution on the principle of one man one vote for the whole of India which would provide for a strong centre and demand transfer of all power and responsibility from His Majesty's Government to that Central Government. Having regard to the attitude of the Moslem League and His Majesty's Government's latest announcement the Constituent Assembly should not longer feel bound by the restrictions imposed upon it by the Cabinet Mission scheme and the Assembly should frame a constitution irrespective of any artificial groups and sections and without conceding any right to any part of India to remain outside Indian Union.

The recent deplorable and tragic events both in Bengal and in the Punjab indicate the incitement to Pakistan and the attempt to impose a communal domination upon the Hindus and the Sikhs would accelerate civil strife and would lead to cleavage and chaos and bloodshed if it is not the desire of the British to forcibly disrupt India's unity and integrity then it is her paramount and sacred duty not to permit the splitting up of India into warring zones and conflicting province but to liquidate British Rule with honour to herself and lasting benefit to India's millions by substituting a strong Central Government in a Pan Indian Union in place of the present British Power and the attributes of Sovereignty should be vested in that Government.

It will be immoral and unconstitutional to impose Pakistan on millions of Hindus in Bengal and millions of Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab and Frontier, Sind and Bilochistan against their wishes and to imperil their culture and their religion and their political economic and civic rights. The Hindus mass prepare themselves throughout the country to organize an effective opposition to Pakistan.

This Working Committee calls upon all sections and classes of Hindus and Sikhs to sink their differences and to establish Anti-Pakistan Front throughout the country irrespective of party and political affiliations.



8. Division of Punjab

Extracts from the Resolution Passed by the Congress Working Committee, 8 March 1947

AICC Papers, File No. G-43/1947, NMML.

During the past seven months India has witnessed many horrors and tragedies which have been enacted in the attempt to gain political ends by brutal violence, murder and coercion. These attempts have failed, as all such attempts must fail, and have only led to greater violence and carnage.

The Punjab, which had thus far escaped this contagion, became six weeks ago the scene of an agitation, supported by some people in high authority, to coerce and break a popular ministry which could not be attacked by Constitutional methods. A measure of success attended this, and an attempt was made to form a ministry dominated by the group that had led the agitation. This was bitterly resented and has resulted in increased and widespread violence. There has been an orgy of murder and arson and Amritsar and Multan have been scenes of horror and devastation.

These tragic events have demonstrated that there can be no settlement of the problem in the Punjab by violence and coercion, and that no arrangement based on coercion can last. Therefore it is necessary to find a way out which involved the least amount of compulsion. This would necessitate a division of the Punjab into two provinces, so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part.

The Working Committee commend this solution, which should work to the advantage of all the communities concerned, and lessen friction and fear and suspicion of each other. The Committee earnestly appeals to the people of the Punjab to put an end to the killing and brutality that are going on, and to face the tragic situation, determined to find a solution which does not involve compulsion of any major group and which will effectively remove the causes of friction.

9. 'Meet at Round Table Conference—Punjab Problem'

The Tribune, 11 March 1947.

LAHORE, 10 March.—As an obvious reaction to the Congress High Command's 'Divide Punjab' declaration, Mr Firoz Khan Noon, a Muslim League leader, attempted on Monday an approach to the Sikhs by urging that 'the time has certainly arrived when Sikhs and Muslims should sit round a table to find a solution to their political problems.'

'I am almost certain', he declared in an interview to the Press in Lahore, 'that if these two could agree, the Punjab Hindus would welcome this pleasant change in the political atmosphere. What we want is peace and prosperity for the Punjab, a province which is the homeland of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, all combined together. We have lived here for centuries and we must live together.'

The Muslim League leader said: 'If there is a strong and independent demand from a majority of Sikhs for a division of the Punjab, they will find that there will be a good response from the Muslim side for satisfying their legitimate aspirations.'

'It appears that the Congress Working Committee in Delhi have passed a resolution demanding a partition of the Punjab in the belief that the Punjab Mussalmans will dislike the

idea and accept Akhand Hindusthan at the Centre. The Sikhs interests seemed to have had little influence in this decision.

‘Lahore Division, with a population of seven million, has four million Muslims in its six districts. Amritsar district itself, where the most sacred Sikh temple is situated, is predominantly Muslim, particularly if the Tarn Taran tehsil is taken out of the district, Amritsar town itself has a Muslim majority.

‘The rivers, irrigation systems, hydro-electric schemes and the Sikh holy places in the Western Punjab, not to mention the rich Sikh colonies in Montgomery, Lyallpur and Sargodha districts, seem to have played no part in the Congress decision. The Sikhs even in the Eastern Punjab will not be more than 33 per cent, the Muslims and the Hindus each being the same.

‘Thinking Sikhs already know that if there is a partition of this nature, the Sikhs in the Eastern Punjab will in due course be absorbed in the Congress party, who have already captured nine Sikh seats in the Punjab out of 33. The obvious implication is that the Congress by this partition of the Punjab are hoping that this proposed Eastern Punjab State will become part and parcel of Akhand Hindusthan. But it must not be overlooked that this proposed Eastern Punjab State, where the Sikhs and the Muslims together will constitute a majority may join the “B” Group.’

Mentioning some of the ‘alternatives’, he said: ‘The suggestion was put forward on behalf of some Sikh thinkers that the Punjab as it stands today should be a separate sovereign State allied to the neither Akhand Hindustan nor to Pakistan.

‘Another suggestion that has been mooted is that the Punjab should be with the B Group, but that the Sikhs should have certain guarantees provided in the constitution and enforceable by a new Federal Court in the B Group, to be set up for this and other purposes.

‘It is also suggested that in this case the Muslims could have no objection in the following:

‘The Sikhs could be taught the Gurmukhi language if the majority of Sikh legislators so desire. The precedent exists in Switzerland, where French, German and Swiss are taught in their schools.

‘The Sikh share in the education grant could be handed over to a Sikh educational council as in the case of Washington, DC, where 33 per cent of the Negro population were receiving one-third of the total education grant in 1937.

‘We could also provide in the constitution that in matters connected with the Sikh religion, law of inheritance, customary and other personal laws, the majority Sikh vote shall prevail.

‘The Sikhs could also be given a completely Sikh public services commission to select Sikhs for the public services.

‘We could also provide that our newly set up Federal Court should have the right to dismiss any servant newly appointed when not entitled to hold that post in accordance with the quotas fixed for the various communities.

‘Another suggestion which has been examined is that if the predominantly Sikh areas wish to go under an adjoining Punjab, Sikh State, they should be allowed to do so.’—APA



10. 'This Partition Racket'

Editorial from *Dawn*, 11 March 1947.

We return to the Congress resolution on the partition of the Punjab because of a statement made by the Congress President at Madras on Sunday. Congress, he said, wants a United India, but 'if that is not possible and if people must murder each other, then the Working Committee recommend the division of the Punjab into two provinces.' Mr Kripalani went on to say that Congress would also demand the partition of Bengal 'if conditions are the same in Bengal.' What is significant in these remarks is that in the case of Hindus and Sikhs Congress readily accepts partition in order to 'save' them from Muslim majorities, but when it is a question of saving Muslims, the Congress would not agree even to the establishment of large pockets of Muslim population *within a province*. This is the attitude which the Congress Ministry in Bihar has adopted. Although so many thousands of Muslims have perished in a manner now known to the whole world and although the best means of ensuring the safety of Muslim minorities in that land of communal lunatics is to concentrate the Muslim population in fair-sized pockets, the Congress has resolutely refused to countenance it. The casualties and losses suffered by Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab, where incidentally the biter seems to have ended by being bitten, have so unnerved these pseudopatriots that they have hastily revised their earlier attitude to 'vivisection'; but the far greater losses suffered by Muslims in Bihar leave them so unmoved that they decline even to concentrate Bihar's Muslim population in areas within the province itself.

As for the new stunt of partitioning Bengal, it is even more senseless than the proposal to divide the Punjab into halves. Bengal's Hindus are themselves strongly opposed to it except for a few who have other axes to grind. In Bengal as at present constituted the Hindus are an effective and powerful minority and the great majority of them, we imagine, would not be so foolish as to throw away this position at the instigation of non-Bengalee Hindus whose contempt for the 'Bengalee Babu' is traditional. This talk of partition of provinces, however, is only an academic irritant introduced into the situation by the Hindu High Command and cannot be regarded as a practical proposition worthy of serious notice. Apart from the fact that Muslims would not yield an inch of their homeland, who is to decide on partition and carry it out? The British Government have already declared that they are no longer going to interfere in internal issues whose solution the Indian parties must themselves find by agreement if possible. If there is no agreement the British will transfer power to certain PROVINCES or Combined Government for those provinces. The question of a 'part' of a province or 'partitioning' a province no longer falls within the initiative of the British who will take the provinces as they are. Mr Kripalani and other members of the Congress Working Committee will do well to read more carefully the speech of Sir Stafford Cripps in course of the Commons debate.

11. Strong Opposition to Division of Punjab

B.S. Moonje's Interview with *Globe*, 11 March 1947

B.S. Moonje Papers, S. No. 112, NMML.

Dr Moonje was asked a question—What have you to say to the proposal of dividing the Punjab, so that the claim and quarrels of the Moslems on one side and of the Hindu-Sikhs on the other be satisfactorily settled?

Dr Moonje replied—I have been always opposed to the idea of division of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Punjab. There was some such proposal by some Hindus when I was in the Round Table Conference, London. But I was deadily opposed to it. Even now I am similarly dead opposed to the idea and why? It is supposed that such division will satisfy the Moslems? Will it stop the hooliganism? No. It is a terrible mistake to suppose that it will lead to peace and tranquillity. The ambition to be a Ruler and to be called His Majesty no community can shed when developed unless and until it is actually killed by a fight. In view of what has happened a few months ago in Bengal and is at present happening in Punjab, who can say that the proposal of divide Punjab and Bengal, even if agreed to by the Hindus, will satisfy the ambition of sovereignty implicit in Pakistan? If not, then where is the wisdom of the Hindus and the Sikhs surrendering and succumbing to hooliganism?

Will not the British Government, then, transfer their sovereignty separately to Punjab and Bengal where there is Moslem predominance and thus lead to division of India?

Dr Moonje replied—What do you mean by predominance? Will the Moslem majority of a few per cent and that too of doubtful existence be interpreted as Moslem predominance? One can understand predominance when the population ratio is 70 or 75 per cent? If that be the criterion with the Congress, then possibly the Punjab may be divided along the line of Jhelum but not along the Ravi River and the predominantly Moslem Bengal will be circumscribed into a small handful province between west Bengal and Assam. Will the Moslems agree? They will certainly not. Then where is the advantage if the Hindus and the Sikhs were to give out and proclaim their committal beforehand? Besides where is now the British Government to divide? The Present Interim Govt, in its policy of appeasement, of the Moslem League, will not have the courage boldness to divide.

Thus, on the whole, it will be wise to stick out for Akhand Hindusthan, being prepared boldly to face whatever bloodshed, rapine, loot, arson and what not would come in the offing just as in China, France and Germany. Peace will eventually come and all controversy will then be settled.

12. 'Words to the Sikhs'

Extracts from an Editorial from *Dawn*, 18 March 1947.

...This new stunt of partition of the Punjab is ostensibly intended as a sop to the Sikhs in order to keep them tied to the Congress chariot wheel. But a little reflection should convince the Sikhs that if they consent to this proposal they will be selling their birthright in the Punjab to the Hindus for a mess of worthless pottage. Quite apart from the fact that Congress leaders like Mr Gandhi and Mr Sarat Bose have strongly opposed the partition of either Bengal or the Punjab and that Muslims will in any event resist the proposal to the last, what would the Sikhs gain if a number of Punjab's eastern districts were to be constituted into a separate province? The Sikhs will form 17.5 per cent of the population, Muslims 32.6 per cent and Hindus about 50 per cent. The Sikhs will thus remain a hopeless minority in the new province, even if created, and the dominant majority will be the Hindus....

The Sikh leaders who are allowing themselves to be used as pawns in the Hindu bid for supremacy seem also to forget that once their community has served the Hindu cause and helped the Hindus to secure a little more territory for Akhand Hindustan, the Hindus will appear in their true colours and not only subject the Sikhs to political domination but also

to the process of assimilation for which Hinduism has been well known through the ages. Pandit Nehru in his book *The Discovery of India* proudly refers to the assimilative capacity of Hinduism which he describes in the language of a British writer as 'infinitely absorbent like the ocean'. With obvious satisfaction the Pandit writes: 'It is odd to think of India with her caste system and exclusiveness having this astonishing inclusive capacity to absorb foreign races and cultures', and he goes into ecstasies over 'the wonderful assimilative power of Hinduism'. When the Sikhs have finished fighting for the Hindus, shedding their blood to further Hindu ambitions and casting their dead on the 'battle fields' to establish a new Hindu Empire, their job will have been done and they will themselves be cast aside. Then, in the small new province adjoining the Hindu stronghold of the United Provinces—assuming that such a province does materialize—the Sikhs will be taught new lessons in 'democracy'. They will be told that a minority of 17 or 20 per cent is always a minority and must be content with a minority's position. Lulled by the siren voice of the Congress Master Tara Singh may today hug illusions of a 'Khalistan' in which the Hindu population of 50 per cent will render homage to the Panth and accept the leadership of the Sikh minority, but his grandchildren and their children will reap the bitter fruits of his illusion. The Hindus will doubtless be generous towards the Sikhs in allowing them to serve as soldiers in the Army, as personal body guards, motor drivers, artisans and in other capacities calling for brawn and sturdy labour, and possibly as contractors, but they will never allow the Sikhs or any other section of Indians, which refuses to merge its identity in the 'absorbent ocean' of Hinduism, to rule over them or even to share equal power with them in any part of Hindustan.

The Sikh leaders will do well to reflect on these stark realities and desist from their present suicidal policy. When master Tara Singh marched at the head of a Lahore procession with a naked sword in his hand he may have forgotten Mr Patel's Meerut dictum that the sword is always met by the sword, but the deplorable event that followed in the wake of that procession should have convinced him that by far the best course for the Sikhs was to sheathe the sword and substitute in its place sweet reasonableness.

13. Problems and Prospects of Partition in the Punjab

Letter from Janki Nath to S.P. Mookerjee, 19 March 1947

S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Installment II to IV, Subject File No. 95, Pt. I, NMML.

Tribune Office,
Lahore,
19th March, 1947.

Respected Sir,

Before writing to you some-thing about the Punjab situation drawing your kind attention to certain important and immediate problems to be solved, I must congratulate you on your single handed effort to create a strong opinion for the division of Bengal. With a man of your determination at the helm we are bound to succeed. You must have seen the marked change of the tone and attitude of the Muslims in general after the division of Bengal and Punjab was advocated by the Hindus of Bengal and Punjab.

The attitude of the so-called Nationalist Muslim organizations like the Majlisi Ahrar, Ulemai Hind, Shia Conference and others to the division of the Punjab and Bengal clearly exposes

them. None of these organizations has any hold on the Muslims and yet they influence our line of action. They support a weak centre with parity for the Muslims and Hindus and strong provincial governments, thus envisaging strong Punjab and strong Bengal separating from the Indian Union at any future time. They are worst than Jinnah and are like snakes in the sleeve. They say that they do not want the division of India on the basis of religion and want a united India but does the division of Bengal or the Punjab pre-suppose Pakistan or vivisection of India. We should not give up the demand for the division of Bengal and Punjab unless the Muslims concede joint electorates and the two provinces agree to a strong centre ultimately responsible for the peace and tranquillity of the provinces as well. It is strange that the Congress leaders like Mr Sarat Chander Bose oppose the demand although they have been able to do pretty little for the Hindu minorities in either Bengal or the Punjab.

I need not relate to you the woeful plight of the Hindus and Sikhs in the western Punjab and NWF Province. The Muslims have killed and rendered homeless thousands and burnt villages in hundreds. In short the worst that the Muslims League could do has been done. There is, however, one aspect of the present situation which has impelled me to write to you and encroach upon your precious time. I hope in view of the urgency of the matter no time will be lost in moving in the matter. There being no Hindu leader in the Punjab who commands universal respect, it is the Sikhs under the lead of Master Tara Singh who can help. Though the Congress has united the Hindus yet the leaders are divided against each other and all are working under the leadership of Mr Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew and hence nothing can be expected of them.

I have already written to you that on the Basis of population the Hindus and Sikhs can claim three-fourths of the Lahore division in addition to Ambala and Jullundur divisions, but so far as the Lahore division is concerned our weakness is that we are slightly in a minority except in Amritsar district. The position in Lahore division excluding Amritsar district is as follows:

Dist	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Margin.
Lahore	10,27,772	6,67,603	3,60,169
Gurdaspur	5,89,923	5,63,008	26,335
Sialkot	7,39,218	4,51,279	2,87,939
Gujranwala	6,42,706	2,69,528	3,73,178
Sheikhupura	5,42,344	3,10,164	2,32,180

It is clear from the above figures that in some of the above districts especially Lahore and Gurdaspur districts we could easily retrieve our position provided we act judiciously. The Muslims have facilitated our job. If the Hindu and Sikh leaders persuade the displaced villagers from Multan and Rawalpindi division as also from the affected areas of the Frontier province to come and settle in Lahore and Gurdaspur districts and even if we succeed in bring 6 or 7 lakhs of Hindus we can easily turn tables against the Muslims in both the above districts. The sins of Muslims will recoil on their heads. If we allow the Congress to take the lead, they will simply send back these villagers to their own villages leaving them permanently in the jaws of death and leaving a permanent Hindu Sikh minority in the Pakistan zone. The Hindus and Sikhs in these areas have already been considerably eradicated and this is the time to settle these people in the Central Punjab.

The reason for this action on our part should be obvious. Apart from the key and historical position that Lahore holds, Hindus have a great stake in the city. Their stake runs to thousands of crores and if they but spend a few crores they will save a lot for themselves. I may here say

that there is a lot of scope for the absorption of lakhs of Hindus and Sikhs in these areas and I can give you a perfect picture as to how to settle and absorb these refugees if you feel that my suggestion is feasible and practicable. If the Muslims can ask the Bihari Muslims in their lakhs to move to different provinces like Sind and Bengal surely the Hindus with vast resources can do the job and make the position of Muslims in the Lahore and Gurdaspur districts untenable.

If we do not move in time, the Congress will take the initiative and persuade the remnants of the Hindus and Sikhs to go back to their districts where they will ultimately be engulfed by huge Muslim majorities.

With respects,

Yours respectfully,
Ex-Secretary to Raja Narendra Nath,

Shriyut Dr Shyama Prashad Mookerji,
Sir Asotosh Mukerji Road, Calcutta.

14. Gandhi Opposes Partition

Letter from M.K. Gandhi to Jawaharlal Nehru, 20 March 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 124–5.

I would like you...to tell me what you can about the Punjab tragedy. I know nothing about it save what is allowed to appear in the Press which I thoroughly distrust. Nor am I in sympathy with what may be termed by the old expression of 'hush hush policy'. It is amazing how the country is adopting almost the very measures which it criticized during the British administration. Of course, I know the reason behind it. It makes no appeal to me.

* * *

I have long intended to write to you asking you about the Working Committee resolution on the possible partition of the Punjab. I would like to know the reason behind it. I have to speak about it. I have done so in the absence of full facts with the greatest caution. Kripalani said in answer to a question in Madras that it was possible that the principle might be applied to Bengal also. I was asked by a Muslim Leaguer of note...if it was applicable to the Muslim-majority provinces, why it should not be so to a Congress-majority province like Bihar. I think I did not know the reason behind the Working Committee's resolution, nor had I the opportunity. I could only give my own view which was against any partition based on communal grounds and the two-nation theory. Anything was possible by compulsion. But willing consent required an appeal to reason and heart. Compulsion or show of it had no place in voluntariness.

15. Support for Partition of Punjab

Report by the Information and Broadcasting Department, New Delhi, 22 March 1947
IOR, L/P&J/10/78, Acc. No. 3651, NAI.

Master Tara Singh the Sikh leader at a press conference in New Delhi on 21st March reiterated according to API, 'We shall not join any ministry which is dominated by the Muslim League'. He said: There are two alternative plans. One is if there is a change in the composition of the

Punjab Assembly on a basis of thirty per cent seats for Hindus and Sikhs each and forty percent for Muslims, it does not matter who the premier is. 'If we cannot get that constitutional change then in the present set-up the premier must be either a Sikh or a Hindu'.

Master Tara Singh agreed in principle with the partition scheme (see note below) but his final agreement would depend on the boundaries. He was anxious that the Sikhs—or at least the major portion of them—should not be divided under any partition scheme.

He said the Sapru Committee had approved the principle that there should not be a majority of a single community in the Punjab. 'I would advise coalition governments in all parts of India just as at the Centre'.

Master Tara Singh felt the Punjab Disturbed Areas Act had been enacted too late. 'Probably it has been promulgated to prevent retaliation', he said. He was anxious that power to shoot at sight should be given to the military only. 'The Punjab police is finished. It is divided into communal compartments', remarked Master Tara Singh adding Muslims were in an overwhelming majority in the Punjab police.

Master Tara Singh said if no settlement could be arrived at he would prefer the continuation of Section 93 of the Government of India Act. Under Section 93 the position will remain as it is; if Muslim League rule is established it will be worse, he said.

NOTE

Reports of what has been described as a Zonal Autonomy Plan for the Punjab has been published in the press which attributed the authorship of the plan to Pandit Nehru, but his authorship is not confirmed. According to the New Delhi correspondent of the Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore the plan envisages a regional administrative system which can be given effect to under section 59 of the Government of India Act of 1935 which empowers a Governor to distribute portfolios for the administration as he chooses.

Under this plan, says the correspondent Ambala and Jullunder Divisions will be grouped into an eastern zone and placed in charge of three Ministers—one Hindu, one Sikh and one Muslim. The western zone, consisting of Multan and Rawalpindi Divisions will be governed by two Muslim and one Sikh Ministers. The Lahore Division will be a joint zone under one Muslim and one Hindu Minister. The ratio indicated provides a rough idea of cabinet ministers balanced between the majority and the minorities and is amenable to alteration and adjustment.

The correspondent continues: except for matters concerning finance and irrigation, Ministers in each zone shall enjoy complete autonomy. While the plan guarantees full protection to minorities it also envisages a Muslim premier and limits the Cabinets power to finance and irrigation affairs. The plan will endeavour to maintain the unity of the Punjab; but if need be it will provide a basis for partition; each part having its own cabinet responsible to a legislature and a Governor without affecting the set up of the present Legislative Assembly's structure.



B. BENGAL

1. Rights and Safeguards for Hindu Minority of East Bengal

Letter from D.N. Banerjee to S.P. Mookerjee, 17 February 1947

S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Correspondence with D.N. Banerjee, Installment II to IV, NMML.

20, Umesh Datta Road
Bakshi Bazar, DACCA.

D.N. Banerjee

HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF DACCA.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 8th instant reached me on the 10th. I was then lying ill with influenza. This will explain my delay in replying to your letter. As desired by you, I am enclosing herewith my drafts of fundamental rights and special constitutional safeguards for the Hindu minority in Bengal. I had been thinking of publishing something on these questions when your letter came. We had some discussion on these matters at our last Political Science Conference at Delhi.

I have also indicated in the drafts my view on the question of the partition of Bengal into two Provinces. I was so long hesitant. But I am now feeling that a grave danger faces the Hindu minority in Bengal. If it is to survive these repeated onslaughts from the 'brute majority' and maintain an honourable existence, then it must have the special constitutional safeguards indicated in my Second list, or there must be a partition of Bengal into two provinces, East Bengal and West Bengal, within the Union of India. There is no other course left. You are, therefore, to take up the matter very seriously. A large section of Hindu public opinion here is on the side of partition. It says that there must be, at least, one safe area in Bengal for the Hindus of East Bengal to take shelter in. As it is, the Hindus are on the point of losing the whole of Bengal.

In regard to the question of the connotation of the proposed Union subjects, I shall require a little more time. This question could be best settled by an oral discussion by a few constitutional experts. As, however, there is no such opportunity for me, I shall let you know my own views as early as possible. My recent illness has interfered with my programme of work. Moreover, in our University, I have, in addition to my administrative duties as Head of a Department, to do both undergraduate and post-graduate teaching work. All this leaves very little time to me to do any other work. Still, I have been carrying on somehow. However, kindly let me know your probable address, or addresses, during the next three weeks so that I may communicate to you my views on the connotation of the proposed Union Subjects.

On the 12th instant I received a letter, along with an enclosure, from Mr Sanat Kumar Ray Chaudhury of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha. He also wanted my views on the question of fundamental rights, and others. I am sending him today a copy of my drafts. I think that will do.

Trust you are doing well.

With highest regards,
Yours sincerely,
D.N. Banerjee.

A. Some Typical Fundamental Rights

1. All citizens shall in all respects be equal before the law. There shall be no privilege on the ground of sex, birth, colour, creed, religion, or occupation. All citizens shall enjoy the same civil political rights, without distinction of race, language or religion.
2. There shall be full and absolute protection of life and liberty for all without any distinction of the ground of origin, nationality, language, race or religion. Exceptions to this principle may be made only in cases recognized by international law.
3. The liberty of the person shall be inviolable and no person shall be deprived of his liberty except in accordance with law duly made and promulgated. Except when taken in the act of committing an offence, no person shall be arrested without a warrant issued by a magistrate, which must be shown at the time of arrest.
4. The dwelling of each citizen shall be inviolable and shall not be forcibly entered into except in accordance with law duly made and promulgated.
5. The right of free expression of opinions and ideas by speech, writing, print, picture or other similar means, as well as the right to assemble peacefully and without arms or weapons, and to form associations or unions, shall be guaranteed to all citizens for purposes not opposed to public morality or public order. Laws regulating the manner in which the right of forming associations and the right of free assembly may be exercised, shall contain no political, religious, or class distinction.
6. Public employments shall, without distinction, be open in the same degree to all citizens, under conditions prescribed by law.
7. Within the territory of the Union of India every citizen shall be free to choose his domicile or place of residence, to change his domicile or emigrate, to choose his profession or means of livelihood, and also to transfer his property. The exercise of these rights may, however, be made subject to limitations prescribed by law in special circumstances.
8. The liberty of the Press shall be guaranteed, subject to the requirements of any law duly made for the prevention of the abuse of this liberty. The press shall not be subsidized by the state.
9. The secrecy of letters and other correspondence may be violated only in cases provided for by law.
10. No person shall be removed against his will from the jurisdiction of the Judge to whom the law assigns him. Exceptional Courts shall only be permissible in cases provided by laws promulgated before the commission of the offence.
11. No penalty shall be established or enforced except by virtue of a law.
12. No one shall be deprived of his property except for a public purpose, and in the cases and according to the forms established by law, and in consideration of a just compensation previously determined.
13. Subject to the requirements of law duly made in the interests of public morality, public safety, and public order, there shall be liberty of conscience, religious liberty, and freedom of public worship for all. No one shall be compelled to join in any manner whatever in the forms or ceremonies of any religious denomination. And all religions shall be equal before the law.

No person shall be permitted to refuse, on the ground of religious opinion, to fulfil any obligations of citizenship. Nor should religious beliefs be permitted to be pleaded as a reason for non-fulfilment of public duties.

14. There shall be no *ex post facto* legislation. This provision shall not, however, apply to Acts of Indemnity passed for the protection of the military men, police and others in respect of unlawful acts done by them, *bona fide* and in the service of the country, during a time of war or during serious internal disorder or disturbances.
15. Freedom of commerce and industry shall be guaranteed throughout the Indian Union, subject to such conditions and limitations as may be prescribed by law in respect of any specific commodity or article.
16. The freedom and secrecy of elections shall be guaranteed by law. Every person in the position of an employee or workmen shall have a right to such free time as may be necessary for the exercise of his civic rights.
17. There shall be protection by law to the language, culture and traditions of all communities.
18. The sanctity and inviolability of the places of religious worship shall be guaranteed by law. Such places of religious worship shall not, however, be permitted to be used for the commission of any offence forbidden by law.

The above list of fundamental rights is not exhaustive, although fairly comprehensive. Our Constitution-makers should consider the extent to which the people of India should be allowed to keep and bear arms. In the United States of America there is no restriction in this regard, and this right is included within the Bill of Rights. Perhaps in the circumstances of India and in view of the complexity of its communal problem, there should not be any unrestricted right to keep and bear arms. At the same time, the present position in this country is not at all satisfactory. The issue of a licence for a gun or a revolver even to a highly respectable citizen depends entirely on the whims or caprices of local officials. This must be stopped.

B. Constitutional Safeguards for the Hindus Minority in Bengal in case Bengal is not divided into two Bengals, East Bengal and West Bengal, within the Union of India.

1. Any question raising a major communal issue in the Bengal Legislature shall require for its decision a majority of the representatives present and voting of each of the two major communities in Bengal, namely, the Hindu and the Muslim, as well as a majority of all the members present and voting.
(This provision has been copied, *mutatis mutandis*, from clause (2) of Paragraph 15 of the Cabinet Mission Declaration of 16th May, 1946. If such provision was considered necessary, obviously, in the interest of the Muslim minority in India, it is all the more necessary for the Hindu minority in Bengal).
2. There shall be joint electorates with proportional reservation of seats for different communities, in respect of elections to all legislative bodies, provincial, urban and rural.
3. There shall be a statutory composite Cabinet for the Province of Bengal. Excluding the office of Prime Minister, the number of Hindu members (including the Scheduled Caste representatives) shall be equal to the number of Muslim members on the Cabinet. Portfolios shall be equitably distributed between the Hindu and Muslim members of the Cabinet. The portfolio of law and order shall be in the hands of a Hindu Minister.
4. Fitness, to be determined by the results of competitive examinations held by competent authorities, such as the Provincial Public Service Commission, and others, should alone be the criterion of eligibility for appointment to offices. If this principle is not

accepted, then at least 50 per cent of the officers in every branch of public service under the Government of Bengal shall be reserved for the members of the Hindu Community including the Scheduled Castes.

5. The Head of the Government of Bengal shall alternately be a Hindu and a Muslim. The Chief Minister shall be the leader of the Party which will command a majority in the Lower House of the Bengal Legislature in case the Legislature is made bicameral, or in the Provincial Legislative Assembly if the Legislature is made unicameral.

As there is now a very serious threat to the sense of values, culture, language, religion, and economic and political interests—nay, to the very existence, with honour and self-respect,—of the Hindu Community in Bengal, there should be started, as a regrettable necessity, an intensive agitation in the country for the partition of Bengal into two Provinces within the Union of India, namely, East Bengal and West Bengal, unless the special constitutional safeguards for the Hindu community in Bengal as shown above, are agreed to by the Muslim community in Bengal, or in India, as the case may be.

2. Mookerjee's Views on Bengal Partition

Letter from S.P. Mookerjee to St Nihal Singh, 24 February 1947

S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Correspondence with St Nihal Singh, Installment II to IV, NMML.

My dear St Nihal Singhji,

Thanks for your letter. I do not remember having kept any of your letter unanswered. I am sorry some of my letters did not reach you. I have not yet definitely supported the proposal for partitioning Bengal. But this is a matter which requires very careful consideration by Hindus of Bengal. If the majority community in Bengal refuses to concede the elementary rights of Hindus and the latter are placed at the mercy of a communal electorate controlled by the majority community we have no option but to ask for Bengal's partition. Either Muslims must agree to live in Bengal as Bengalees or Hindus must be allowed to have their homeland comprising areas where they are in a majority. Roughly speaking Hindu Bengal will have about 2 crores and 25 lakhs population of which 75 per cent will be Hindus. Muslim Bengal also will have a population of about 3 crores and 50 lakhs of which 75 per cent are Muslims. The majority community in either province will hesitate to oppress the minority as it will constantly realize that almost the same proportion of Hindus and Muslims are living as a minority community in the two provinces concerned. Bengali Hindus also will have a chance of developing themselves in accordance with their best tradition and thereby contribute to the development of India as a whole.

This problem has become acute in view of the recent pronouncement by the British Prime Minister. There is a possibility of Bengal being made a sovereign province and handed over to the Moslem League Government when the British will withdraw in June, 1948. This means perpetual slavery for Bengali Hindus unless they can get one get of the following three things.

1. Compel Bengal to remain as part of a united India which would be governed by a strong Central Government capable of protecting the Hindu minority.

2. Compel the Bengali Muslims to live as Bengalees first and not as rank communalist and
3. divide Bengal so as to enable Hindu Bengal to be linked up with rest of India leaving Muslim Bengal to develop as she may like.

We must not be guided by emotion alone. This is a life and death question for us and if we refuse to face realities at this crisis we shall be doomed.

I am proceeding to Delhi tomorrow and shall be there for some time. If I can manage, I may come to Dehra Doon for a day from Delhi and spend some quiet hours with you. I very much look forward to meeting you and Mrs St Nihal Singh. I hope you have fully recovered now. I did not know that you were confined to bed.

My address at Delhi will—C/O Director of Agricultural Research Institute, New Pusa, Delhi.

With best wishes,

Your affly,
St Nihal Singh,

Suryasthan,
16, Nemi Road, Dehra Doon

3. Demand for Partitioning Bengal

Letter from Debendra Nath Mukherjee to S.P. Mookerjee, 25 February 1947
S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 102, Installment II to IV, NMML.

**BENGAL PROVINCIAL HINDU MAHASABHA.
162, Bowbazar Street, CALCUTTA,**

Dear Sir,

You are aware that a large section of Hindus in Bengal have been insistently agitating the public mind on the question of dividing Bengal particularly for creating a separate Home-land of the Hindus for their self-expression with their language, religion and culture. They contend that Bengal as she stands to-day will remain in the hands of the Muslim League in whatever way the British may ultimately transfer their powers according to the latest statement of the British Premier. From the legislative politics and administrative actions of the League government, it is clear that they are determined to swallow the minority community in Bengal economically and culturally. It is, therefore, necessary that proper safeguards should immediately be made by the Hindus for their self-preservation.

Bengal may remain united if the Muslims in Bengal agree to:

- 1 Joint Electorate with reservation of seats for the minorities in proportion to their number;
2. Parity of representation of the Hindus and Muslims in the Bengal Cabinet; and
3. Allotment of the Chief Ministry to the Hindus and Muslims in alternate years; and
4. No special privilege or favouritism will be provided for the majority community under the Constitution.
5. Such other provisions as will ensure maximum good to every citizen irrespective of his faith.

But if the Muslims do not agree to these constitutional Provisions, the only other alternative left is to divide Bengal in a manner that the Hindus in contiguous areas numbering more than two crores may form a separate Province with their independent political organization. They will then, not only be able to develop their own culture and interest but also to give protection more effectively to the Hindus in East Bengal where the Muslims may number about three crores and Hindus about 70 lakhs.

Those who oppose the division of Bengal argue:

1. What was achieved by the great patriots like Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee and others after agitation for a number of years should not be undone.
2. Endeavour should be made for forming a bigger Bengal comprising Purulia, Santhal Parganas, Manbhum and Sylhet on linguistic basis. Although there may be still Muslim majority but it will be very small and if there is proper organization and consolidation of the Hindus in this Bigger Bengal, they will be able to maintain their separate entity.

To consider these views, a Conference will be held on the 15th and 16th March at the office of Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha at 162, Bowbazar Street, under the Presidentship of Dr Syamaprosad Mookerjee. You are requested to gather, meanwhile, in writing the collective opinion of your Branch Sabhas, the Bar Associations, Teachers' Associations, Business Communities, and other interest in your district to enlighten the Conference on this question so that the Hindu Mahasabha may come to a definite conclusion of its own.

I am to state at the conclusion the Bengal Hindu Mahasabha has not officially formulated its policy on this important issue, though its members have spoken for or against it in their individual capacity.

Your presence is earnestly solicited on this occasion.

Yours faithfully,
Debendra Nath Mukherjee
General Secretary

4. Demand for a Separate Non-Muslim Province in Bengal

Petition from Some Residents of Calcutta to Vallabhbhai Patel, 12 March 1947
S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 141, Installment II to IV, NMML.

To

Hon'ble Sardar Ballavbhai Patel
Home Member
Interim Government of India
Imperial Secretariat

NEW DELHI

Dated Calcutta, the 12th March, 1947.

Sir,

We beg to approach the Government of India with the fervent prayer that a separate Province be carved out of the Province of Bengal, by inclusion therein of the Presidency Division including Calcutta, the Burdwan Division and the districts of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling. In the above

zone the non-Muslims form a majority being over 70 per cent of the population, and the total population is about 24 millions, which is sufficient for the formation of a major province. We suggest that a Boundary Commission be appointed to include therein such other areas of the Rajshahi and Dacca Divisions which may be necessary for administrative convenience and on the ground of non-Muslim majority.

2. Our claim is not dependent on the question whether Bengal joins the Union of India or keeps out of it as an independent state. We base our claim on the democratic ground of self-determination. If however, Bengal chooses to remain within the India Union, then the separated portion of West Bengal should be placed under the Sub-Federation styled Section A in the Cabinet Mission's plan. If Bengal remains outside the Union and sub-federations are not formed then we claim to be incorporated within the Union of India.

3. It is necessary for us to explain why the people who opposed partition of Bengal forty-two years ago, are claiming the same now. It was then thought that the growing nationalistic strength of Bengal was sought to be curbed by partition. It is now realized that if communal-minded Moslem majority get the authority of perpetually ruling over the non-Muslim community, then their nationalism would be crushed. The spirit underlying both the movements which are in opposite directions, is the same, namely, preservation of the national spirit, just as the Moslem League supported partition then and are opposing it now on the ground of strengthening their communal spirit.

3. The Bengalee Hindus stand much in need of legislation for social reforms. Such legislation will give them the sense of unity and of solidarity. A communally-minded Moslem majority is not likely to support any legislation which would remove the weakness of the present social system of the Hindus. In a national state in West Bengal such legislations would be possible and once the benefits therefrom are released, the Hindus of East Bengal will assimilate the reforms, without legislation.

4. The Bengalees were the first to receive western education. They became ardent admirers of western law, literature constitution, ethical and social ideas and of their arts and sciences. The Bengalees assimilated in their literature the western ideas and enriched the same. Education was planned on western lines. Since the Government was formed on the basis of the Communal Award, the tendencies have been as they were expected to be. In every place where the Moslems and non-Moslems had worked jointly and contributed to common culture, cleavage has been sought to be established. Discord has been assiduously sown where communal harmony had existed. The events of the last 10 years are too well known to require mention. The principles and preachings of the Moslem League could not but lead to different results. It is our fervent desire to protect that part of Bengal where the non-Muslims are in a majority, from that baneful influence, which is subversive of common citizenship. If our hope that the new Province will be wholly run on the liberal ideas of the present times, materializes, then the people of Eastern Bengal, non-Muslims and Moslems alike will get much advantage from the same. It is just possible that in course of time the outlook of the Moslems will improve. Under the helpless position in which the opposition is now placed in the Legislature, it is not possible for them to effect any change in the Government policy and the non-Muslims will be politically dead. We humbly submit that it is against the best interests of the country to allow the present spirit of communalism to triumph. It is not unlikely that the spirit which pervades now the bulk of the Moslem community will infect the non-Moslem community. We consider it an evil day for our Province when the community which is national still now, will become

communally-minded. Already, a Section of the Public has begun to incite the nationalists to communalism by calling them defeatists.

An early action is therefore earnestly desirable.

We have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient servants
R.R. Banerjee, Advocate and 144 other signatories

5. 'Calcutta Barristers Demand Partition of Bengal'

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 12 March 1947.

Fifty Barristers of the Calcutta High Court have issued a statement demanding the partition of Bengal and giving reasons in support of the division.

The signatories include Messrs. N.C. Chatterjee, P.R. Das, A.K. Basu, Surita, S.B. Sinha, Cammiade, S.N. Banerjee, N.N. Bose, S.R. Das Gupta, P.N. Sen, Sankar Banerjee, Jyoti P. Mitter, U.C. Law, B.N. Datta Roy, H.N. Sanyal, A.M. Basu, M.N. Banerjee, N. Sanyal, J.K. Ghosh, R. Chaudhuri and S.K. Das.

Copies of the statement are being forwarded to Mr Attlee, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Acharya Kripalani, Mr L.B. Bhopatkar, Master Tara Singh and Sardar Baldeo Singh.

The following is the text of the statement:

We are supporting the move for the creation of a province in the area where the non-Muslims would be in a majority. We formulate the reasons which impel us to support this demand.

1. Because we want to build up a State based on the principles of nationalism and democracy—joint electorate, universal adult suffrage (one man, one vote), fullest protection to the minorities and fullest freedom of thought and worship for every citizen.
2. Because a strong and self-contained nationalist Bengal alone can be effective protection to the oppressed minority in Eastern Bengal.
3. Because the Muslim League refuses to listen to our just demands 'inter alia' for the abolition of communal electorate, the formation of a national ministry and the eradication of communalism from public services and from the academic and economic spheres.
4. Because we refuse to pay taxes to a communal caucus which wants to cripple and destroy us and because we want to put a stop to communal legislation which aims at destroying the fabric of our national life.
5. Because we are strongly opposed to the transfer of power of the present Provincial Government in Bengal.
6. We do not believe in Pakistan and would resist its imposition in any shape or form. We are determined to remain as willing members of an all-India Union.
7. Because we want to preserve the culture of Bengal and to maintain the nationalist institutions which have been built up by the sacrifices and services of Bengal's noblest sons.
8. Because we do not want to live as serfs in our motherland. We demand freedom as our birth right. We refuse to exchange one slavery for another.

6. 'Demand for Bengal Partition'

Hindustan Standard, 17 March 1947.

The two-day Conference of Bengal Hindus held under the auspices of the Hindu Mahasabha, in a resolution passed on Sunday, advocate the scheme for partition of Bengal as 'the best means to prevent the destruction of the fabric of Bengal's national life.'

The Conference called upon HMG as well as the Interim Government and the Constituent Assembly that Bengal should be immediately partitioned and a separate province for Bengal Hindus must be set up before any transfer of power took place from HMG.

It was decided at the Conference that the Working Committee of the Provincial Hindu Mahasabha should appoint a special committee of experts to draw up a scheme for the delimitation of the areas which would constitute the new province. The Conference also expressed its willingness to co-operate with all political parties and organizations who agree with the principles formulated in the resolution.

The Conference was held under the presidency of Dr Syamaprasad Mookerjee at the Indian Association Hall.

The following is the text of the resolution:

'The latest pronouncement of HMG of the 20th February, announcing its definite decision to transfer all power and responsibility to Indian hands by June 1948, has completely altered the political situation and there is great responsibility now thrown on the representatives of the people who should sink their difference in order that they may shoulder the great task and take over power from the British Government and administer India with credit and efficiency and contribute to the world peace and security.

'This Conference regrets that, in spite of its avowed declaration to quit India the British Government is now contemplating to split India. The latest declaration of HMG implies that if the Muslim League does not join the Constituent Assembly, any constitution framed by that Assembly would not be acceptable for the whole of India and that HMG may hand over power and responsibility to the existing Provincial Government in some areas and not to one Central Government for the whole of India, thus destroying the political integrity of India and sowing the seeds of civil strife and anarchy. The Congress has also accepted the position that no constitution will be imposed on any unwilling part of India, which virtually means a partial concession of Pakistan.

'This Conference records its opinion that this Pronouncement by the British Cabinet clearly envisages the possibility of the imposition of Pakistan for the whole of Bengal. This Conference warns the British Cabinet that the imposition of Pakistan on the whole of Bengal will be firmly resisted. The Hindus of Bengal declare that their cardinal creed is the integrity of India (Akhand Hindusthan) and that they should not accept any such communal rule and shall refuse to pay any taxes or give any allegiance to any such Pakistan Government in Bengal.

'In order to build up a strong National Government it would have been extremely desirable if it were possible to achieve a real understanding between the Hindus and the Muslims in Bengal so that they could live as common citizens in one territorial union as a self-respecting component State in the Indian Federation. But this is not possible as the Muslim League has refused to give up its idea of establishing Pakistan in Bengal and persists in the two-nation theory and refuses to build up a State based on the true principles of nationalism and democracy.

‘This Conference, therefore, demands that the Muslim majority areas in this Province of Bengal must be separated from those areas where the Hindus are in majority.

‘This Conference proclaims its firm resolve that the Hindus of Bengal at least in the Hindu majority areas, must remain within the Union of India and they must not be separated from the rest of India by coercion or by the acceptance of Pakistan in any shape or form.

‘Under the communal Raj prevailing in Bengal for the last ten years the Hindus are being crushed in every sphere of life, cultural, economic, religious and political and the oppressed Hindu minority in Eastern Bengal have not received any adequate protection from communal fanaticism and aggression. In order to end this organized tyrannies and oppression of the Hindus throughout Bengal and in order to put a stop to the carnage and anarchy in Calcutta, Dacca, Tipperah and Noakhali, it is essential that there should be a strong self-reliant State which can save the Hindus within its borders and can also afford effective protection to the oppressed minority in the Eastern Bengal.

‘This Conference advocates the scheme of partition of Bengal as the best means to prevent the destruction of the fabric of Bengal’s national life and to preserve and maintain Bengal’s culture and heritage as well as the national institutions which have been built up by the services and sacrifices of Bengal’s noblest sons.

‘This Conference calls upon HMG as well as the Interim Government and the Constituent Assembly that Bengal should be immediately partitioned and a separate Province for Bengal Hindus must be set up before any transfer of power, takes place from HMG. This Conference demands that this new province should be constituted as a unit of the all-India Federation. This Province will guarantee the fullest protection to all minorities and will build up a State base on the principles of true nationalism and will insist on similar guarantees for the protection of the Hindu minority in the province of Eastern Bengal which shall also function as an integral part of the Indian Union. Every Bengali Hindu living in Eastern Bengal shall be treated as a national in the new Province and shall enjoy as a matter of rights all facilities and privileges which will be open to any citizen living in that Province.

‘This Conference calls upon all parties to unite at this grave crisis of the history of Bengal and to organize a strong Anti-Pakistan Front and to mobilize public opinion effectively on this demand for the creation of a separate Province comprising the Hindu majority areas in Bengal.

‘This Conference also resolves that adequate steps be taken to present the case of Bengal before the Constituent Assembly, the Interim Government and HMG.

‘This Conference calls upon the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha to place this Resolution before the ensuing Bengal Provincial Hindu Conference which will be held at Tarakeswar during the Easter Holidays and to call upon all Hindu Sabhas throughout Bengal to form local committees and to enroll volunteers for educating public opinion on the lines indicated in this Resolution.

‘This Conference further calls upon the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha to appoint a Special Committee of Experts to draw up a scheme for the delimitation of the areas which will constitute the new Province.

‘This Conference emphasizes that the Hindu Mahasabha should act in co-operation with all political parties and organizations who agree with the principles formulated in this Resolution.’



7. Creation of a New Province in Bengal

Memorandum by the Jatiya Banga Sangathan Samiti, 18 March 1947
G.G. (Reforms), File No. 41/3/47-R, Part I, NAI.

Jatiya Banga Sangathan Samiti

PRESIDENT:

JADABENDRA NATH PANJA. M.L.A.

8/C, RAMANATH MAJUMDAR ST.

SECRETARY:

Calcutta

ATULYA GHOSH

JT. SECRETARIES:

HARENDRA NATH MAJUMDAR

ABDUS SATTAR

MEMORANDUM ON THE CREATION OF A NEW PROVINCE IN BENGAL

There is a strong feeling in Bengal for the creation of a New Province comprising the Burdwan and Presidency Divisions including Calcutta, which will be a unit of the Union of India. The aspirations and interests of this province will suffer so long as it will be linked with the other portion of the existing Province of Bengal.

The demand for having a New Province carved out of the existing Province of Bengal rests mainly on three grounds, namely, administrative, economic and political. The proposed New Province has certain peculiarities of its own. The climate is rather dry and the land is rather elevated in comparison with East Bengal. This region is mainly a paddy-producing one and it requires irrigation, whereas East Bengal requires drainage.

Administrative:

Both the area and the population of the existing Province of Bengal are too large for efficient and smooth administration. The area is 83,000 sq miles, about two and a half times that of Orissa. The population of the whole province of Bengal is more than six crores, that is, about three times that of the Bombay Province.

The area of the proposed New Province will be about 30,500 sq miles and the population will be more than 2,31,00,000 of whom Non-Muslims will be about 1,60,00,000.

In these days, the functions of a Provincial Government have multiplied greatly. The Government have to discharge many social services. We feel keenly that in the so called interests of the larger Bengal the real interests of West Bengal are being neglected and sacrificed and its special needs and requirements are not at all being attended to.

Economic:

The agriculturists of West Bengal who form practically the entire population face to-day a great crisis. Their existence is at stake. Irrigation is the main question in this region. As regards the irrigation problem, this region is not getting any impetus and attention from the present system of administration. Whenever any irrigational question arises, the Government evade the question and as such very little improvement has been effected in this part of land.

Paddy, as mentioned above, is the main crop. The price of paddy is getting lower and lower, whereas that of other necessities of life is rising higher and higher. The cultivators of West Bengal are hard hit by the exceedingly low price of paddy. The Government is callous

to the situation and it must be so because most of the people of East and North Bengal have to buy paddy or rice.

Unless West Bengal has its own Government its grievances will not be redressed. Its people will get impoverished more and more and will be totally ruined, if it is not turned into an autonomous Province under the aegis of the Indian Union immediately.

Political:

The communal tension in Bengal is acute. The reason for this tension is scramble for political and economic power. The ratio of the Muslims and Non-Muslims in the existing Province is 55:45. The population of the two major communities being almost equal, the nominal major community tries its utmost to have the preponderating majority and to domineer over the entire population of the existing province. The communal and fratricidal fight will automatically cease, if the present Province of Bengal be divided into two Areas, keeping in view, the Areas where the Moslems and Non-Moslems will preponderate. In such circumstances, the people of the divided Areas will be able to live peacefully, realize their aspirations and develop the Areas according to their needs.

The proposed new Province does not like to remain a part of a Bengal detached, from the Centre and turned into an 'Ulster'. It (New Province) has made substantial contribution to the growth and formation of the Indian Nation. It cannot discard its nationalism. It yearns to be a part and parcel of the Union of India.

If a plebiscite be taken the majority of the people of the New Province will be in its favour. Many statutory and voluntary organizations and members of the Legislatures and Constituent Assembly and prominent citizens have supported this view, namely, the creation of a New Province in Bengal.

We solicit the favour of your kind help and active assistance in the creation of this New Province.

Atulya Ghosh
Secretary

Jadabendranath Panja
President.

The following organizations and prominent individuals among others have supported the above proposal:

Midnapur District Congress Committee.

Burdwan District Congress Committee.

Hooghly District Congress Committee.

West Bengal Provincial Committee.

Bengal Partition League.

Bangadeshiya Kayastha Sava.

Mymensing Bar Association.

Midnapur Bar Association.

Burdwan Bar Association.

Howrah Bar Association.

Asansol Bar Association.

Kalna Bar Association.

Bagerhat Bar Association.

Diamond Harbour Bar Association

Fifty prominent members of the Calcutta High Court Bar.

More than Hundred Solicitors of the Calcutta High Court Bar.

Barakpur Municipality.

Chairman, Khulna Municipality.

Chairman, Suri Municipality.

Chairman, Bankura Municipality.

Chairman, Kalna Municipality.

Chairman, Burdwan District Board.

Chairman, Murshidabad District Board.

Vice Chairman Hooghly District Board.

Chairman, Kalna Local Board.

President 24 Parganas District Congress Committee.

Secretary, Howrah District Congress Committee.

Secretary, Jangipur Subdivisional Congress Committee. (Murshidabad)

Nagendranath Mukhopadhyay, MLA (Central)

Prafulla Chandra Sen, Member, Constituent Assembly.

Radhanath Das, MLA Member, Constituent Assembly.

Ashutosh Mallick, MLA Member Constituent Assembly.

Dhirendranarayan Mukherjee, MLA Chief Whip of the Congress Assembly Party, Bengal

Annada Prosad Mondal, MLA (Burdwan)

Bonku Behari Mondal, MLA (Burdwan)

Kanailal Das, MLA (Burdwan)

Arabinda Gayen, MLA (Howrah)

Kanailal De, MLA (Bankura)

Kamal Krishna Roy, MLA (Bankura)

Nishapati Majhi, MLA (Birbhum)

Nikunja Behari Maity, MLA (Midnapur)

Promothanath Banerjee, MLA (Midnapur)

Charu Chandra Mahanti, MLA (Midnapur)

Annada Prosad Chowdhury, MLA (Midnapur)

Rajani Kanta Pramanick, MLA (Midnapur)

Sukumar Dutta, MLA (Hooghly)

Bipin Behari Ganguli, MLA (24 Parganas)

Satish Chandra Chakraborty, MLA (Khulna)

Sj Jogendra Narayan Roy, MLC

(Chairman Asansol Municipality)

Manoranjan Sen Gupta, Hon General Secretary, All-Bengal Teacher's Association and Fellow of the Calcutta University.

This proposal for the creation of a New Province in Bengal has been enthusiastically supported in many public meetings held in different parts of Bengal.



8. Report from Bengal Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report for Bengal for First Half of March, 1947, 18 March 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.

...2. The most obvious development of the period has been the intensification of interest in the proposal for a separate West Bengal. This proposal, to which attention had been drawn in previous reports, is a movement well worth watching. Recent events have given it an undoubted fillip. The Mahasabha has been the main protagonist of this proposal and the recent resolution of the Working Committee of the Congress on the possibility of a division of the Punjab, coupled with an explanatory statement of the President of the of the All-India Congress Committee relating that proposal to Bengal, have also focused the attention of the Congress on the question. The present attitude of the Mahasabha leaders is that since the Muslim League is not prepared to abandon the demand for Pakistan the League will try to settle the issue by launching direct action against the Hindus which will eventually lead to civil war as a result of which the British will seek to retain their position in India. Plans to fight Pakistan in Bengal and for a Hindu State comprising the Hindu majority districts of West Bengal are therefore necessary. The appointment of a Special Committee is envisaged the functions of which will be (1) to organize strong Hindu public opinion for a separate State, (2) to establish closer contact with the existing nationalist and social organizations of the Province including the Bar Libraries, and (3) to devise ways and means for giving earliest effect to this demand for a separate Hindu State. In West Bengal itself the Commissioner reports that in as many four out of six districts there appears to be a genuine movement in favour of the separation of West Bengal, as a Hindu majority Province, in anticipation of the coming into being of Pakistan in East India. The movement is not yet vigorous but it is gaining strength and appears to have the moral support of the great majority of the Hindu population of the Division.

3. Failing a lead from the Muslim League High Command it is impossible to indicate with certainty the approach of the Muslim League to recent political developments. There is a feeling, however, in Muslim circles that the statement of the Prime Minister has left the Congress no other alternative but to accede to the demand of the Muslim League or to make preparations for civil war. The most recent development has been the statements of the Chief Minister at Rajshahi and on the floor of the House in favour of a united independent, Bengal governed by the Muslims and Hindus in coalition. It is not yet clear to what extent this statement represents the official view of the Muslim League High Command and responsible Muslim opinion. Reactions at the time of drafting this report appear to be that the statements call for clarification before they can be accepted as a working basis. The announcement of Mr Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, referring to the necessity for the abolition of the communal electorate if any stable coalition Government and non-communal administration can be maintained in the Province together with an appreciative reference to the desirability of maintaining a separate West Bengal State in the event of a non-communal Government being impossible in Bengal as at present constituted, is likely to intensify interest in the present movement towards a separate, West Bengal, Province.



9. Should Bengal Be Divided into Two Provinces?

Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee's Statement, 19 March 1947

S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 142, Instalment II to IV, NMML.

The two days' conference of Hindu representatives from all parts of Bengal, convened by the Bengal Hindu Mahasabha, has unanimously resolved that a separate province must be created comprising the Hindu majority areas in Bengal. A large number of these representatives hailed from Hindu minority areas in Northern and Eastern Bengal. If the majority community in Bengal had shown any indication by their conduct that they were prepared to live with the minority community under an administration which was fair and just to all and to promote the interest of Bengal as a whole, the demand for separation would not have been made. Mr Suhrawardy is loudly, declaring today that Bengal belongs to Bengalis. How does he reconcile this with the systematic policy of his Ministry in giving shameless preference to non-Bengali Moslems and even other non-Bengalis, ignoring the rightful claims of Bengali Hindus. Ten years of communal *raj* in Bengal, has produced disastrous results in every sphere of life. In respect of education, trade, commerce, services, land and property, women's honour, religious rights, the minority community in Bengal has suffered immeasurably at the hands of a ruthless communal administration. What Bengal has passed through is not a mere communal struggle. It is a sinister and planned attempt on the part of an organized government to utilize its machinery secretly and openly to reduce the minority community to a state of serfdom. It should not be overlooked that all this has happened when Bengal has remained within a united India, the Central Government being unable to give any protection to the minority.

Today the British Government has announced that its rule over India will cease not later than June, 1948. If the Moslem League does not agree to join the Constituent Assembly, Bengal may be cut off from the rest of India in the light of this announcement. The Congress also has declared that it will not impose any constitution on any unwilling area which is unrepresented in the Constituent Assembly. If Bengal's constitution is left to be determined by a body of persons, the majority of whom are dominated by the Moslem League policy, whether in or outside the Indian Union, we can expect no protection whatsoever from their hands. Our only salvation in such circumstances lies in demanding for ourselves a separate province which will be large enough in area and population and wherein will reside more than two-third of the total Hindu population of Bengal. Let me analyse the arguments which have been advanced for and against this proposal.

First, it is said that we shall be disloyal to the great patriots who supported the anti-partition movement forty years ago and virtually gave birth to an all-India movement of freedom. Let me emphasize that Lord Curzon's partition and our demand for a new province are like poles asunder. The Curzon partition was aimed at giving a deathblow to the 'seditionist' Bengali Hindus. They were placed in a minority in the then created province of Eastern Bengal and Assam with two major languages, namely, Bengali and Assamese. They were also in a minority in the then created Province of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa which had three languages, namely Bengali, Hindi and Oriya. Our present proposal for Hindu Bengal on the other hand is aimed at saving Bengali Hindus and also the cause of nationalism which is their life-blood. The newly proposed province will have one language and 70 per cent of its population will be Bengali Hindus. After all, the mere mention of the word partition need not throw us into a fainting fit. Let us examine the object with which Lord Curzon tried to advance his imperialistic designs, or the motives that inspire the Communal Award thirty years later, and ask ourselves

if our present proposal is not intended to frustrate those very design and save from political death that element in Indian life which has been responsible more than anyone else for the dismemberment of British Empire in India.

Secondly, it is said that creation of the new province supports the cause of Pakistan. This is entirely wrong. We have demanded that both Hindu Bengal and Eastern Bengal must remain within one India. We are against Pakistan in any form or shape. It does not however depend on Bengali Hindu alone whether division of India shall be prevented or not. If Hindus and other nationalist forces throughout India are rarely determined not to allow any portion of India to go out of the Indian Union, they will get the largest measure of support from Bengali Hindus. If on the other hand an attempt is made to place Bengal out of the Indian Union, due to commitments with which the British Government, the Moslem League and the Congress are close associated, we shall at any rate break the solidarity of Eastern Pakistan, save one area of Bengal and link it up with the India Union.

Thirdly, it is said that the minority Hindus in Eastern Bengal will be completely sacrificed. I believe on the contrary that the creation of Hindu Bengal, which will be linked up with a strong and representative Indian Union, will be a source of tremendous strength in saving the minority Hindus in Eastern Bengal. In Hindu Bengal there will be about 60 lakhs Muslims. No Muslim Government functioning in Eastern Bengal would easily like to torture and torment the minority Hindus in as much as it would be anxious in its own interest to ensure that the minority Moslems in Hindu Bengal should receive a fair and equitable treatment at the hands of the majority representatives. Even if trouble arises, effective and speedy protection can be given by Government of Hindu Bengal sitting in Calcutta, supported by the rest of India. Today the Moslem League ministry is acting recklessly in advancing its communal policy and in spite of all our efforts. We can hardly give any protection to the oppressed. Without political power and the backing of an organized government it is impossible to safeguard the interests either of the people residing within a territory or to any nationals living outside its zone. Only because Muslim League was in power in Bengal could the Ministry extend help to the refugees from Bihar and spend a crore of rupees out of public funds. In Eastern Bengal Hindus will be about 30 per cent of its population which is higher than any Moslem minority in the existing provinces of India. If they are reorganized within the zone and are properly backed by a government of their kith and kin in the adjoining territory, they will be in a much stronger position than at present. Let us not forget that the Eastern Bengal province will for its own sake act with care and caution surrounded as it will be by three predominantly Hindu States, Hindu Bengal, Assam and Nepal and having two strong Hindu Native States, Tripura and Coochbehar close by its heart.

Fourthly, it is said that the division of Bengal on religious basis is against the fundamental principle of nationalism. No one desires religion to be introduced into politics. But why must we hide our head ostrich-like and ignore present realities? Even today the electorates are communal and no Hindu, however advanced his views, can be returned from any Moslem constituency. It is not we who want a division of India or any part merely on religious consideration. But if we find that the whole of Bengal is going to be dominated by communal frenzy and 45 per cent of its population reduced to a state of slavery, only because they follow a particular religious faith, is it a crime on our part to demand that we must have our own territory where we can live as free men, and build up our own culture, our own social and economic life in accordance with our best tradition? I fail to see how by allowing ourselves to remain as slaves under a communal *raj* in a so-called united Bengal, we can advance the cause of nationalism

or socialism. And was not Sind carved out from Bombay only to placate communal whims and did not many of our present oppositionists quietly acquiesce in such division, much to the detriment of Hindus in Sind? Again is not every province in India composed of people belonging to the two major religions and two other faiths, the majority and the minority strength differing from area to area?

Fifthly, it is said that 45 per cent of Bengal's population comprising nearly 25 millions of people constitute such a large number that no government can possibly crush them. This is nothing but an idle and self-deceiving slogan. The Hyderabad State today includes 90 per cent Hindus but they are groaning under a tyrannical rule which is predominantly communal. It is not the number that matters; what matters is the system of administration under which the people are compelled to live. And have we not already had a bitter taste of crush-the-minority rule even under the British Governors? Must we wait further to appreciate the significance of a full-fledged Pakistan rule? Only the other day the Chief Minister announced that it was his deliberate policy to import Punjabi Muslims to the armed police force in Calcutta so that he can faithfully serve his own community. A further contingent of 1000 Punjabi Muslims is being brought into the province, mainly for the purpose of guarding Western Bengal areas. If the ministry continues its present policy of manning the services mostly with its chosen men, based on communal considerations, and places them in key provinces, the minority community will not be able to extricate itself easily from the iron clutches of such an administration.

After all let us not allow emotion alone to determine vital matters that affect our very existence. We would have all liked to see Bengalees as such living together in one united Bengal. If however the majority community constantly declare and demonstrate, that to use the words of Mr Jinnah, that there was nothing in common between Hindus and Moslems, indeed, there was much that was in conflict between the two, why should we shed constant tears and ourselves pave the way for committing suicide. Let others go in their own way and see for themselves how they can serve the best interest of their community and province. Let us choose our path and build up at least that portion of the province where we predominate. We shall make that an effective base for defending the rights and honour of any citizens in the North Eastern India.

Apart from all other considerations, India with her vast population of 400 millions can well afford to have a much larger number of provinces than at present. The United States of America with about 180 millions population has 49 States. The creation of new provinces comprising Andhra, Gujarat, Maharashtra has also been forcibly demanded. Purely for administrative reasons, Bengal may be well divided into two provinces. Although Hindi is the common language for the vast majority of the people in the areas covered by Bihar, UP and CP, they constitute three distinct provinces. A Hindu Bengal consisting of more than 25 millions of people will not be a small province. Economically it will be self-sufficient and its development will become easier once we keep the communal conflict in the background. The Damodar Canal will open up vast possibilities for expansion of this area, leading to the economic prosperity of the people.

I do not ignore that our demand for a separate province will be stoutly resisted by the Moslem League. If this succeeds, Eastern Pakistan will virtually perish. It is all the more reasons why all Hindus in Bengal should sink their differences and stand united on this great issue, inspite of all the 'isms' that divide them. Today we hover between life and death and we must look at our problems with complete realism. It was the clarion call of the Bengali Hindus

which awakened the nationalist forces of the entire Indian continent. The blood and toil, the sacrifice and suffering of thousands of Bengali Hindus, known and unknown, laid the foundation for the freedom of India. This self-chosen dedication was not prompted by narrow personal interests but by the noblest idealism aimed at freeing their beloved motherland from bondage. Today when freedom is about to dawn on India, can they not even demand that they must be allowed to live as free men at least in that portion of India where they predominate and remain linked up with the imperishable spirit of one India? This demand must now be fearlessly and openly voiced by all sections of the people throughout the province so that none can dare oppose it. I firmly believe that this alone will offer a peaceful solution of the grave communal problem, for it will give the two major communities in Bengal full freedom to develop their own culture and tradition in the areas where they live in predominant numbers; both are also sure to recognize soon that it will be to their mutual interest to guarantee full protection to the respective minorities in the two province.

Let me emphasize in conclusion that this matter must be made an all parties' question. I have every hope the Congress party in Bengal will also take it up in right earnest as a result of its deliberation at the Convention which it has called early in April. The coming twelve months will be hard and difficult for us. We will have to pass through the fire of sacrifice and suffering which we must cheerfully face. If we work with unity and determination there is no force on earth that can deprive us of our just and legitimate right. This will give us a new hope and aspiration, something for which we can live and die, which will destroy completely that deadly attitude of negation and defeatism, of compromise and pacts, which has absorbed the minds of many Bengali Hindus today. Let us wake up and fortify ourselves by our own strength, courage and organization, so that we may confidently call upon the rest of India, whose sympathy we have always valued, to stand by us at this supreme crisis in the history of this great province.

10. 'Pakistan Bound to Come but Bengal Is Indivisible'

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 19 March 1947.

'The British Government has finally decided to hand over by June 1948 and Bengal is eagerly looking forward to the era of independence. With a feeling of emancipation in the near future the Muslims of Bengal can on the one hand look forward to a rich and prosperous Bengal and at the same time to a period of prosperity and glory in the year to come', said Mr H.S. Suhrawardy, Bengal's Chief Minister at a conference held on Sunday at Kashimpur in Tippera attended by a large audience.

Continuing, Mr Suhrawardy said, 'But much work has still to be done in order to prepare ourselves for wielding power and earning the full fruits of independence. Too often has it been stated that Bengal is poor, but she is not poor. If Bengal kept all the money that it earned, it would have quite enough in its coffers to meet its expenses and progress along modern lines. There have been various financial settlements but although the last one was better than the former, it was still unfair to Bengal which contributed more than any other province to the Centre. If Bengal could cut itself asunder from the Centre, it would be able to keep its resources', he said.

Visualizing the future Mr Suhrawardy observed that he was not in a position to say now whether there would be a Central Government or not or if there would be any division from a

complete Pakistan. But of this he was certain that Pakistan was bound to come to the Muslims in some form or other and Bengal would form part of Pakistan where there would be scrupulous regard for the rights of all minorities.

‘BENGAL INDIVISIBLE’

Deprecating the ‘threats’ being made to divide Bengal he emphasized that Bengal belonged to Bengalees and Bengal was indivisible. One portion of Bengal depended upon the other and all were entitled to participate in its administration, and he hoped that all sections of the people were determined to live and work for making Bengal a glorious land.

...Unfortunately Bengal was short of several of its requirements, Mr Suhrawardy said. It imported cloth, salt, mustard oil, sugar, dal and pulses, yarn for weavers and fishermen and hosiery, kerosene and such like commodities from outside. Most of these necessary articles were controlled by the Government of India and were sent to Bengal in controlled quantities on condition that they were sold through controlled shops within the province. Fortunately mustard oil and mustard seeds and other edible oils had been decontrolled and he hoped that pulses would also be decontrolled in the near future.

The Chief Minister further said that salt had already been decontrolled, kerosene was coming now in fair quantities, but there seemed to be no sign of the decontrol of cloth and yarn. He was aware of the terrible shortage in the province and the general cry for both these commodities. It was a pity that Bengal did not get its fair share from the Government of India and no body could say when justice would be done to it.

NEW ERA OF PROSPERITY

Concluding his speech Mr Suhrawardy said, ‘We must make ourselves self-sufficient in these necessary commodities and I hope that when independence would be achieved a new era of prosperity would dawn on Bengal. For the time being Bengal is in financial straits. The effects of the war are still being felt throughout the province and we have not yet been able to rehabilitate ourselves while other provinces have been able to lay by surplus unfortunately at our expense’.

On arrival at Comilla air strip Mr Suhrawardy, who was accompanied by Mr Mafizuddin Ahmed, Chief Whip and Mr Ali Ahammad Khan, MLA, was received by local officials. After the reception the party proceeded to Kashimpur. The journey covered approximately 40 miles of rough country roads. Groups of people had gathered at wayside places to discuss their problem with him. The Chief Minister made enquiries about the crop position and other problems concerning the local population.

11. Opposition to the Movement for Partitioning Bengal

Extract from the Governor’s Report to the Viceroy, 19 March 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 17, NMML.

Extract from report No FJB-21 dated 19th March 1947 from His Excellency Sir Frederick Burrows, Governor of Bengal to His Excellency the Viceroy.

2. The movement for partitioning Bengal is gathering momentum. Hindu opinion is at present very divided. For once Sarat Bose and Mr Gandhi see eye to eye and both condemn

the movement, of which Syamaprasad Mookerjee and the Hindu Mahasabha are the chief protagonists. Suhrawardy has made a number of speeches on the subject, his line being that Bengal must be independent of the Centre, that Hindu and Muslim Bengalis must work in harmony for the common prosperity of the province, and that one-party rule in this and other Provinces must end. His sentiments have been echoed by two of his colleagues, but I doubt if the rank and file of the Party have the vision to realize that they cannot hope by means of their present political power (which is to some extent the artificial creation of British rule) to dominate the Hindus with whom the economic power still rests, and I see that, possibly under pressure from the Party, Suhrawardy has had to 'explain' that when he speaks of a League–Congress coalition in Bengal he is assuming coalitions in other (Congress dominated) Provinces too. I am not sure how this arises if Bengal is independent: For the moment I, like Tar-baby, 'ain't sayin' nuthin'. My immediate objective is to get the Budget safely through the Assembly by 31st March. The last fortnight of March is nearly always a period of Ministerial stress and strain; and by the beginning of April the shape of things at the Centre should be clearer.

12. 'Socialist Party and Partition'

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 20 March 1947.

...The Socialist leader, Dr Rammanohar Lohia, in a statement explains his party's attitude to the question of Pakistan and the present move for partition of the provinces of the Punjab and Bengal. Dr Lohia said:

The demand for Hindu and Sikh homelands in East Punjab and West Bengal is sure to grow. An acute emotional need of millions cannot be argued away. We must meet the emotional need that has given rise to the demand for Pakistan and now for Hindu homelands on its own ground, cleanse it of communal dirt and give it a democratic direction. Nationalists in East Bengal should help Muslims to achieve democracy and to choose or create suitable leaders. With that end in view and so that reaction does not rule over Pakistan in the name of religion, an irresistible agitation must speedily grow for realizing two simple demands of democracy, land to the tiller and basic wage to the labourer.

In all this debate about Pakistan and Hindu homelands nationalists are behaving as though they need not talk to the Muslims any more. It is true that the Muslims do not listen to us and will probably not for sometime to come, no matter what we talk. And yet we must never cease to take account of their feelings or to keep talking a language that could interest them.

The Socialist leader added: 'The current agitation is giving to the imperious need of West Bengal millions a communal turn and one which gives it no strength against a storm. This agitation should plainly and simply aim at the creation of a member State of the Union. This State shall provide its population entire freedom from British control, satisfy their yearning to be part of the Indian Union, give them security and enable them to share in the all-nation schemes of river training, of renewal of agriculture and industry, which will make life fuller and joyful.

'...This plan of action outlines for the west as also the east of the province a movement for kisan-majur democracy, more particular, struggles for land to the tiller and basic wage to the labourer. In the west, it strives to create a member State of the Indian Union. In the east, it persuades Pakistan to free itself from all British control. Besides, two over-all items have to be added, abolition of caste and establishment of Gram raj.

‘At the same time, the spirit of Gram raj must be embodied in village institutions to serve in a small way health and educational, judicial and police needs and perhaps also, to engage in the beginnings of a co-operative economy. The more we grow in Gram raj, the less will the debate between a weak Centre and a strong Centre vex us.’

To work out any plan of action Dr Lohia asserts, ‘we must draw sustenance from the example of Mahatma Gandhi. No matter what fires of hate rage round him and fuel added to these from the Central or Provincial capitals he move from village to village and teaches neighbours the art of good conduct. Every person can in his limited area do likewise and in spite of difference in opinion, own at least one friend of the other faith.’

Continuing he says ‘while I affirm that the ideas of Pakistan and Hindu homelands imperial freedom and democracy and act as brakes on progress, I repeat that general phrases of nationalism and socialism, unless defined in the concrete terms of this plan, will set the seal on religious division over a very much wider area and make the tyranny of communal rule complete.’

Dr Lohia concludes: ‘The pace of events is rapid and will even increase as each day of the fourteen months passes. Our people are blundering through rioting and killing and maze of spoken aspirations and muted needs to the United Republic of Hindustan. Can we intervene consciously in this process? The agency to work out this plan will not be difficult to create, for, if a sufficient number of people express themselves devise their instruments’.—(A.P.)

13. Congress Opposition to an Independent Bengal

Record of Interview between J.F. Burrows and K.S. Roy, 22 March 1947

TOP, Vol. X, p. 6.

After some desultory talk, the conversation was steered by Mr Roy to the present political situation in Bengal and its relation to the political situation elsewhere in India. He said it was inconceivable that Bengal should stand by itself as an independent State and that there was no possibility of the Hindus co-operating if the dominant Muslim majority made that an issue. What the Hindus would probably do in such circumstances would be immediately to launch a passive resistance movement (if it remained at that), refuse to pay any taxes to the existing Government of Bengal and set up a parallel Government of their own to which they would pay taxes. He expressed great appreciation of the Chief Minister’s (Mr Suhrawardy’s) recent speeches but felt that they were the expressions mainly of his own individual opinion and had but slight backing from the Muslim League Party.

HE said that in his view Pakistan, envisaged as enjoying sovereign and independent status, would be difficult to apply to Bengal divided as it is from the nearest potential Pakistan unit, the Punjab, by over 700 miles of territory comprising two Hindu Provinces and with three Hindu Provinces as its neighbours. He suggested that the proper course for Mr Roy and his Party to adopt was to be reasonable and to meet the Chief Minister more than half way so that a Coalition Government could be set up in Bengal irrespective of what happened in the rest of India to enable a peaceful transfer of power to be made.

Mr K.S. Roy replied that if that could be accomplished he and those for whom he spoke would be more than satisfied and he added that they would be content to leave the issues of the number and distribution of portfolios in such a Coalition Government in the hands of the Governor.

Chapter 10. Volunteer Organizations

1. Formation of Hindustan National Guards

Circular Letter from the General Secretary, AIHM, to all Provincial Hindu Sabhas,
5 January 1947
AIHM Papers, File No C-165, NMML.

ALL INDIA HINDU MAHASABHA,
READING ROAD,
New Delhi

CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 2.

The General Secretary,
...Provincial Hindu Sabha

Dear Sir,

The All India Hindu Mahasabha at its Gorakhpur Session has chalked out a definite plan of the organizing Hindus in order to meet the situation caused by the political developments which have resulted in outbursts of Muslim aggression and fanaticism in several parts of India.

The first and foremost item of the seven points programme of the All India Hindu Mahasabha is to start a Hindu National Army styled as 'Hindustan National Guards' or 'Hindustan Rashtra Sena'.

In order to implement this programme it has decided to conduct a Workers' Training Camp at New Delhi, 1st February 1947 for ten days, so that trained workers may be available in every province who would immediately undertake this work.

1. The classes would open on the 1st February, 1947, in the Hindu Mahasabha Bhawan, New Delhi, and would close on the 10th Feb.'47
2. Each Provincial Hindu Sabha would send two workers to the class one of them being for Hindustan Rashtra Sena work and the other for general organization work.
3. The traveling expenses of these workers upto Delhi and back would be borne by the Provincial Hindu Sabha and the All India Hindu Mahasabha would arrange the boarding and lodging of the workers at Delhi.
4. The names of the workers should reach the Head Office before the 20th January, 1947.
5. Those workers shall have to devote at least one year for doing the work for which they are being trained.

While making selection for the person to be incharge of the Hindustan Rashtra Sena it should be borne in mind that such person should be of sufficient organizing ability as to enable to work as the Provincial Organizer. He may be given some honorarium per month in order to enable him to devote his whole time to the work on returning to the province. A full scheme on the subject is under consideration and will be intimated in due time.

By order of the President.
Ashutosh Lahiry
General Secretary
All India Hindu Mahasabha

2. 'National Guards Advised to Stick to Noble Ideals'

Dawn, 11 January 1947.

Broach, Friday.—Mr Ahmed E.H. Jaffer, MLA (Central) presiding over the Gujerat Muslim League National Guards Conference this evening, exhorted his audience to develop courage to face the present situation, fortitude to bear its consequences and persistence in keeping to the ideals of the Muslim League.

He said: 'Our aim in life is not to destroy, but to create faith in honourable living of all the communities of India. This can only be achieved when we are fully developed in body, mind and spirit.

'So let us achieve this through a movement that stands for service and sacrifice.

'Let there be large-scale organizations devoted to the physical culture and training of self amongst the Muslim masses. The Muslim League has given an ideal and national guards mean to achieve this end.'

Referring to the present political situation, Mr Ahmed Jaffer said that it was a pity that the Congress had not realized its mistake even now. Instead of accepting the statement of 6 December in a straight and an honest way, it is trying to camouflage its real intentions.

'Unless and until the Congress accepts Grouping unequivocally, how can the Muslim League enter the Constituent Assembly?

'Let the Congress sincerely work for the establishment of Groups and the League will also help it in establishing a Union.

'This is the only *viamedia* we can accept. Otherwise, let them have their Hindustan and we shall have our complete independent Pakistan. The Musalmans cannot be fooled by the Congress and I hope the British Government will also be not duped this time.'—API

3. Government Attitude towards Khaksars

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Allama Mashriqi, 12 January 1947
SWJN, Vol. I, pp. 109–10.

New Delhi

Dear Allama Mashriqi,

Thank for your letter of the 9th January which was handed to me by your representatives. I have discussed the matter with them and given them my reactions on the various points raised.

I do not know the exact position in regard to some matters as these relate to the Home Department. But so far as I know the Government of India are not at present concerned with

any bans or other restrictions on the Khaksar organization. These are entirely provincial matters and the present Government of India, unlike the previous one, does not interfere in provincial matters. Your chief grievance appears to be against the Punjab Government. Many things have happened in the Punjab which we have not liked but we do not think it proper to interfere. Nor is it constitutionally possible to do so.

There is a definite distinction between the old Government of India and their treatment of the provinces and the present Government of India.

I do not see how any question arises now about the Government of India issuing any kind of a press communiqué in regard to Khaksars. The old position is ended and now each provincial administration can take such action as it desires including the issue of any fresh statement.

...I do not know anything about properties which were confiscated. This matter should be taken up with the local administration in question.

As regards the newspaper you wish to start, the main difficulty is one of newsprint which is very scarce at present. So far as I know no special permission is necessary. As for the newsprint, application can be made to the department concerned. This will depend upon the newsprint available for distribution.

So far as I am concerned I do not wish any special restrictions to be placed on the Khaksar organizations or their peaceful activities. But you will realize that the situation in India at present is very difficult and a delicate one and many Provincial Governments as well as the Government of India have had to impose restrictions generally though not on a particular organization. As a rule action is taken by provincial administrations. In such a matter the Government of India only deals with the areas directly under its control and these are very few.

Yours sincerely
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Report from Bombay Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report for Bombay for Second Half of January 1947,
3 February 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 18/1/47, NAI.

Note showing the development of Volunteer organizations in Bombay Province.

1. Rashtra Seva Dal.

The present strength of the Dal is 49,300. The Dal celebrated its 6th anniversary on 28th December 1946 throughout the Province by holding flag salutations and meetings and by taking out processions and prabhatferis.

2. Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh.

The present strength of the Sangh is 27,308. The Sangh volunteers went through their usual daily programme. The annual Maharashtra Provincial Camp was held in Poona on 7th and 8th December 1946. Annual winter camps were also held at various places. In Thana district, the volunteers patrolled the Hindu localities at night in view of communal situation.

3. Khaksar Volunteer Corps.

The present strength of the Corps is 231.

4. Muslim National Guards.

The present strength of the Guards is 14,986. The Guards celebrated Mr Jinnah's birthday on 25th December when they held flag salutation ceremonies and took an oath to save the honour of the Muslim League flag and Mr Jinnah at the cost of their lives.

A conference of the Gujarat Muslim National Guards was held at Broach from 10th to 12th January at which intemperate speeches were made. The object of this conference was to infuse the spirit of the organization in Gujarat districts.

In Bombay City six Guards were arrested on 25th January for shouting slogans. They were however, warned and released on the same day. Two others were convicted and sentenced to one year's Rigorous Imprisonment each for defiling a place of worship and committing theft.

5. Lok Sena.

The present strength is 1,825. It has branches in Bombay City and in Thana, Sholapur, Nasik and West Khandesh Districts.

6. Bombay National Guards.

They took part in the celebration of the birthday of Mr Subhas Chandra Bose and of the 'Independence Day'.

7. Arya Vir Dal.

The volunteers did relief work in connection with riots.

8. Samata Sainik Dal.

The present strength is 7,545.

9. Azad Hind Dal.

This is a new organization sponsored by Forward Bloc and the Indian National Army men. Its present strength is 1,076. The Dal has branches in Bombay City and in the districts of Poona, Dharwar, Bijapur, Thana and Ahmednagar. The branches at Poona, Dharwar and Bijapur are controlled by the Congress while the other branches by the Forward Bloc.

The branches at Poona have been started by disgruntled Congressmen in the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee whose grievances against the Congress leadership and the Rashtriya Seva Dal are that the masses of Maharashtra are not adequately represented by its own leaders in the Ministry and in other fields of Congress activities.

In Bombay City the volunteers are trained by Captain James of the Indian National Army in drill and physical training and defence exercises.

Note—The Dal has no influence but is politically dangerous.

10. Sikh Nav Javan Dal.

This is a new organization started by Mr Jogendra Singh Chadda and Sardar Karter Singh for carrying on propaganda of Sikhism in other communities. Mr Kartar Singh who organized this, was a leader of the Bombay Akhali Dal. Its strength is 200. The members attended the 'Laksha Chandi Maha Yajna' for maintaining order during the first, second and third weeks of January 1947. They are doing relief work for riot-affected Hindus.

Note—This organization is not potentially dangerous.

NB—There was no appreciable activity by the other Volunteer organizations.



5. Report from NWFP

Extracts from the Fortnightly Report for NWFP for the Second Half of January 1947,
5 February 1947
Home Poll (I), 18/1/47, NAI.

SECRET

... REDSHIRTS.

Strength.—8,000.

Uniform.—Dark red safas, red coats, or shirts, red shorts or trousers, leather belts and badges of rank.

Weapons.—Nil, Volunteers are often accompanied by country bands, carrying Congress flags.

Activities.—Red shirts parade to words of command and march in file and threes. Bugles are occasionally used at big Redshirt rallies.

The Redshirt volunteers are utilized at big political rallies held by the Congress and Redshirt organizations to keep order, act as body guards for notable political personalities, and in the past, have been used during various civil disobedience movements for picketing of courts, liquor shops, and others. Their activities have been usually non-violent. Their policy is determined by their leader, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, The Redshirt organization is based on a net-work of village committees, the presidents of which are known as 'Saddars', The following titles are used in the Redshirt organization:

Salar-i-Azam—commands Redshirts of the whole N-WFP.

Salar—one for each district.

Generals, Colonels, Majors, Captains, and Lieutenants, who command smaller parties of Redshirts. Peshawar City alone contains three Redshirt 'Generals'.

During the month, parties of Redshirts have proceeded on goodwill missions to North and South Waziristan, Mohmand tribal territory, the Kurram Agency, Swat and Bajaur, in order to acquaint the inhabitants of tribal territory with the Congress creed. The mission which proceeded to North Waziristan is stated to have contacted the Faqir of Ipi. The mission to South Waziristan only penetrated a short way into the Agency and was turned back owing to the possibility of their being attacked by tribesmen hostile to them.

A few Redshirts have resigned from the organization and joined the Muslim League during the month.

An actual or potential threat to public order.—While the Congress Ministry is in power in the N-WFP, the organization cannot be said to be an actual or potential threat to public order. If, however, the Muslim League took power in this province, it is possible that the Redshirt volunteers might constitute a threat to public order, if any campaign was launched by Congress against the Muslim League.

MUSLIM NATIONAL GUARDS

Strength.—5,000.

Uniform.—Green safa, or usual headgear, green coat, shirt, or trousers, leather belt and badges of rank.

Weapons.—The volunteers usually carry spears, sometime with leather slings, or lathis, and those, who hold licenses for arms, have been noticed carrying arms. Some of the volunteers also carry sheathed daggers. Bands accompany the volunteers and banners are carried bearing the star and crescent. Bugles are also used.

Activities.—Parties of Muslim National Guards, some of whom carried spears and lathis, have performed routine drill movements, and have marched through Peshawar City and other towns, headed by bands. They have attended all large Muslim League meetings during the month, and small parties accompanied Muslim League propagandists in their tours of the rural areas. New enlistments have been made in volunteers in Peshawar Tahsil, where Muslim League Committees have been formed.

On 15th December, about 900 Muslim National Guards marched to Peshawar Cantonments railway station to celebrate the departure of 80 Muslim League supporters from various districts in the N-WFP, who left for Bihar.

On 17th December, 58 Muslim National Guards were present at the Nowshera Cantonment railway station to welcome S. Abdur Rab Nishtar, Member for Communications in the Interim Government.

The second Muslim League medical mission returned to Peshawar from Bihar on 24th December and was given a warm welcome. This mission included various Muslim National Guards, and members of the party addressed a public meeting in Peshawar City, describing their experiences in Bihar. Human skulls and leaves from burnt copies of the Quran were displayed. On return to their villages, those Muslim National Guards who belonged to the second medical mission, have been relating harrowing stories of the Bihar atrocities.

Reports have been received of individual Khaksars, Redshirts and Ahrars who have joined the Muslim National Guards during the month.

An actual or potential threat to public order.—At present, the organization is acting in a non-violent way, but the carrying of spears, licensed arms, and their undesirable conduct on certain occasions, give ground for believing that they might constitute a potential threat to public order, in the event of the Muslim League deciding to launch any kind of campaign directed against the Government then in power.

KHAKSARS

Strength.—1,200.

Uniform.—Ordinary khaki clothes. The volunteers wear a type of Arab head-dress and sometime carry miniature Qurans.

Weapons.—The Khaksars carry special plated spades, with leather slings as usually used for rifles. Some of the volunteers carry sheathed daggers.

Activities.—Khaksars march in twos and threes, obey words of command, and offer salutes to their leaders. They are summoned by the sound of bugle, and on occasions, have carried out mock battles. The Khaksar volunteers receive their orders direct from Khaksar headquarters and follow the vagaries of their leaders' will. Ostensibly, their organization is for social service, but in actual fact although they occasionally assist in keeping order during religious festivals, their activities are chiefly of an organizational nature, and directed to strengthening their movement. The political attitude of the Khaksar organization in this province has been against the Congress, Redshirts, and the Muslim League.

N-WFP. Khaksars held their usual weekly rallies and parades in Peshawar, and most other towns of the N-WFP. A few meetings were held, which failed to attract large audiences at which Khaksar speakers advocated the formation of an 'Azad Muslim League', and an 'Azad Muslim League Office' was opened in Peshawar City on 28th December. Those Khaksars who had proceeded to Sind to support Khaksar candidates in the Sind Assembly elections have now returned to this province.

An actual or potential threat to public order.—The Khaksar organization undoubtedly constitutes a potential threat to public order, in view of the district discipline imposed on the organization, and the uncompromising attitude adopted by their leader, although they have not actually been responsible for any breaches of the peace during the past year.

AHRARS

Strength.—200.

Uniform.—Redcoat.

Weapons.—Medium-sized polished axes which cannot be described as meant for anything except display or use as a weapon. They are sometimes fitted with leather slings.

Activities.—Small parties of Ahrar volunteers marched through Peshawar City on various occasions, carrying their axes.

An actual or potential threat to public order.—Owing to the little influence this party has in the Frontier Province, they cannot be described as a potential threat to public order, although it is clearly undesirable that they should be permitted to carry axes in public.

RSS SANGH

Strength.—2,000.

Uniform.—Khaki shirts, white shorts, khaki stockings, and canvas shoes. They salute an orange-colored flag.

Weapons.—Lathis.

Activities.—RSS Sangh volunteers continued to hold their daily rallies at which parades and physical exercises took place. The annual camp was held at Peshawar City from 25th to 28th December, which was attended by volunteers from Mardan, Risalpur, Nowshera, Charsadda, Shabqadar, Peshawar City and Cantonments and Kohat. One hundred and forty-two RSS Sangh volunteers from Rawalpindi, and another party from Lahore also attended the camp. Two-day camps were also held at Dera Ismail Khan from 25th to 27th December, and in Bannu from 29th to 31st December.

Interest by Hindus in the organization appears to be on the increase.

The following volunteer organizations also exist in the N-WFP but their membership is so weak that their activities do not require further notice:

Bajrang Sewak Akhara, Mahabir Dal, Ranjit Dal, Arya Samaj, and Akali Dal.

By order, etc.,
D.G.H. de la FARGUE,
Chief Secretary to Government,
North-West Frontier Province.



6. Strength of RSS in Orissa

Telegram from Cuttack, Orissa, to Home Deptt., New Delhi, 5 February 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 22/3/47, NAI.

IMMEDIATE

Please refer to your telegram No. 22/3/Poll (1), dated 31st January 1947.

2. Mr A.E.H. Jaffar's question referred to activities of RASHTRIYA SEWA SANGHA a report about which was sent in the Government Express letter No. 246-C dated 30th January.

3. The telegram under reference refers to RASHTRIYA SWAYAM SEVAK SANGH. As far the province of Orissa is concerned the information about this SANGH is furnished below.

4. A training centre in Cuttack town has been organized by Mr MUKUNDA RAO MUNJEE OF Nagpur, a member of RASHTRIYA where about 60 Hindu students are receiving training in lathi drill wrestling GYMNASTIC and others. The training centre has not yet been given a name, but it is locally considered to be a part of RASHTRIYA. There is no other branch of RASHTRIYA in this Province.

5. The Cuttack training centre is obviously of a military nature in view of its training programme, but it cannot be said to be a military or criminal organization.

6. Government have not received any representation in regard to the training centre, but District Magistrate of Cuttack received a few days ago a petition from an officiallocal MUSLIM league stating that the centre is a direct challenge to Orissa MUSLIMS. District Magistrate has enquired into matter and his report shows that MUSLIM League's fears are largely unfounded.

7. So far as this Province is concerned, question of resignation of Congress Hindus from the RASHTRIYA has not arisen; and there is nothing to show that SANGHA has been responsible for any riots in the Province.

8. In view of position explained above, as far Government of Orissa are concerned, they see no reason at present to declare the SANGHA to be an unlawful organization in the interest of peace; nor do they see any necessity for appointing a Committee to investigate the activities of SANGHA.

SECY: & ASST: SECY: HOME DEPTT: (2) & CABINET

7. Report from CP and Berar

Extract from the Fortnightly Report for CP and Berar for the Second Half of January 1947, 6 February 1947
Home Poll (I), 18/1/47, NAI.

... 5. Volunteer Organization:

1. Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh: There was a general increase in the membership of this organization during the month. Ten new branches were opened and a defunct one revived.

Besides the usual parades and lathi drill, there have been camps, rallies and demonstrations at a number of places. Weapon training with wooden models was given at Mandla. The programme at these camps and rallies consisted of PT, lathi, sword, and lezim exercises. Squad drill, simple skirmishing, Indian games, guard mounting and dismounting were practised at the Nagpur camp on the 24th December which was attended by about 2,000 volunteers. Volunteers were asked to be ready to defend their religion and culture. At the Wardha winter

camp which was attended by 2,400 volunteers Ram Prasad Tiwari of Jubbulpore said that the unorganized and undisciplined Hindus of Noakhali were unable to protect themselves even though Congress was in power at the centre and in view of the inability of Congress Ministries to check disorders, every effort should be made to intensify training and increase the membership. At another camp in Amroati, Pakistan was criticized and Subhash Bose's methods were held out to be the best suited for present problems.

At another camp in the Jubbulpore district, the speakers attacked the Muslims in the Muslim League who, they said, were obstructing the country's freedom. The communal disturbances in East Bengal were reviewed and members were warned to be on the alert. The volunteers were not to be on the offensive, but to be ready to defend their life, property, religion and culture.

2. Azad Hind Dal: A new branch was opened at Harda in Hoshangabad and a defunct one revived at Akola.

Squad drill was performed by the Nagpur branch. At Yeotmal rifle exercises were also practised with the aid of wooden models. This organization was responsible for posting notices at important cross-roads in Yeotmal giving extracts from a speech by Jai Prakash Narain exhorting Hindus and Muslims to unite and paralyse British rule. Regular parades were held in Damoh (Saugor). The Jai Hind Dal and the Charkha Sangh at Pandharkowda (Yeotmal) have been amalgamated.

At a flag salutation ceremony of the Dal, Dr Kashikar prophesied a severe movement against the British and said that the volunteers of the Azad Hind Dal, Rashtriya Sewa Dal and the Hindusthan Red Army would serve the purpose of a National Militia in securing India's freedom.

At a meeting of the Azad Hind Dal at Yeotmal, it was said that there could be no true freedom without bloodshed and members were advised to prepare for the next fight in which they would be expected to play an important part.

3. Muslim National Guards: There has been a general increase in membership of all branches, and activities were more noticeable. Seven new branches have been started, Jubbulpore district claiming four of them. The Sohagpur (Hoshangabad) branch was revived. The membership of the Jubbulpore branch has risen during the last three months from 400 to 2,500.

Daily parades, lathi exercises, drill and military formation were the principal features of the training. In Damoh (Saugor) parades are held with spears and lathis and in Bilaspur, where the training is given in a private place, daggers are used. Swords were also used in Buldana.

There were demonstrations on Mr Jinnah's birthday (25th December) at Nagpur, Jubbulpore, and Raipur. At Raipur, a procession was taken out when volunteers shouted provocative slogans. At an 'intellectual' class in Jubbulpore, it was pointed out that one of the principles of Islam was 'Jihad' (holy war), and volunteers were exhorted to shoulder the responsibility of protecting their religion and nation against their enemies.

Following an anonymous letter that Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh workers will burn Maulana Burhanul Haq's house at Jubbulpore, Muslim National Guards mounted guard over the Maulana's house. A report is being called for. At Nagpur and Damoh (Saugor), Muslim National Guards patrol Muslim localities.

Recently the members of the Bilaspur branch gave a demonstration of physical feats and prizes were awarded to the best performance. A similar demonstration was held at Khamgaon (Buldana) on the 11th and 12th in lathi, sword, dagger and spear exercises by Muslim National

Guards and other Muslim akhadas. The volunteers were privately exhorted to strengthen the branches.

'Bari Memorial Day' was celebrated on the 13th January at Nagpur by three branches. In his presidential address, Abdul Salam Faruqui advised plain living and high thinking. He said that the Muslim League would have to seize political power from the British and would have to safeguard themselves from the Congress with the help of their National Guards who, he claimed, were the standing army of the League. He also appealed for larger enlistment in order to serve the community with a view to achieving Pakistan.

4. Samata Sainik Dal: The strength in Nagpur district has increased from 3,000 to 3,500 during the last three months and at Chanda it is reported to be 650 including 150 girls. A new branch was formed at Raipur.

5. Hindusthan Red Army: The branches of the Red Army in Nagpur city have been divided into three zones, each in charge of an organizer. The instructors of individual branches have to work under the guidance of zone organizers who will submit daily reports to headquarters through special cycle messengers.

A branch of the Hindusthan Red Army was formed in Harda (Hoshangabad).

The Nagpur and Akola branches perform squad drill regularly, while the Gondia (Bhandara) branch held daily parades and marched in the streets shouting anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist slogans....

8. Activities of RSS

Questions in the Central Legislative Assembly, 11 February 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 22/3/47, NAI.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Starred Question No. 178

(To be answered on 11th February, 1947).

178. Mr Ahmed E. H. Jaffer.—(a) will the Honourable the Home Member please state whether Government propose to appoint a committee to investigate the activities of the Rashtriya Sewak Sangh?

(b) Have Government received any representation in regard to the recent activities of the RSS?

(c) Is it a fact that the Sangh has branches all over India?

...

Reply.—

The Honourable Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel:

(a) Government have no intention of appointing a Committee to investigate the activities of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh.

(b) No.

(c) The Sangh has branches in several Provinces.

Mr Ahmed E.H. Jaffer: Have the Government of India made inquiries or do they propose to make enquiries regarding the activities of this organization?

The Honourable Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: There are many organizations of which reports are being received from the Intelligence Bureau and from the Military Intelligence.

Mr Sasanka Shekhar Sanyal: May I know the nature of the relation that exist between the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh and the Muslim National Guards Organization?

The Honourable Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: I do not think between the two there is any relation.

Mr Ahmed E.H. Jaffer: May I know whether the Government of India was consulted by the Punjab Government before they declared both these bodies unlawful?

The Honourable Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: The Central Government knew nothing about it till they read it in the Press.

Lala Deshbandhu Gupta: May I point out that these bodies have not been declared unlawful. The allegation of my friend is not correct.

Mr President: Order, order.

Mr Ahmed E.H. Jaffer: I am referring to the Punjab Government activities.

Lala Deshbandhu Gupta: Have the Government of India received any reports about the Muslim National Guards here.

The Honourable Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: The Government is getting reports about all organizations.

ends.

SECRET

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
Home Department.
Express Letter.**

From

Homein, New Delhi.

To

All Provincial Governments and Chief Commissioners
(except Panth-Piploda and Andaman and Nicobar Islands).

No. 22/3/47-Poll (I).

New Delhi, the 9th January, 1947.

Reference enclosed copy of a question proposed to be put in the Central Assembly by Mr Ahmed E.H. Jaffer. The Government of India would be grateful to be supplied by the 30th January 1947 with material for a reply to parts (b) to (e) and any suggestions or comments on parts (a) and (f) thereof.

(G.V. Bedekar)

Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

....SECRET

From

Akhtar Hussain, Esquire, OBE., ICS.,
Chief Secretary to Government, Punjab.

To

The Deputy Secretary to the Government of India,
Home Department, New Delhi.

No. 791-BDSB,

dated Lahore, the 20th January, 1947.

Memo.

Please refer to your secret express letter No. 22/3/47-Poll (I) dated the 9th January 1947, forwarding a copy of a question regarding the Rashtriya Swayyam Sewak Sangh to be asked by Mr Ahmed E.H. Jaffer in the forthcoming session of the Central Legislative Assembly.

2. Material which may help in formulating replies to parts (b) to (e) of the question is given below:

- (b) It is a purely Hindu organization whose members are undergoing training in military fashion.
- (c) Representations have been made to the Punjab Government through the press and otherwise bringing to notice the militant activities of RSSS and suggesting that the organization should be declared unlawful.
- (d) The Punjab Government has no information.
- (e) The Sangh has branches in nearly all the cities and towns of the Punjab. This province has so far escaped communal riots on a large scale.

3. As regards parts (a) and (f) of the Assembly Question, the Punjab Government is of opinion that action should be taken against all militant communal volunteer organizations.

Akhtar Hussain
Chief Secretary to Government, Punjab

SECRET.

EXPRESS LETTER.

No. 98-BI., dated Peshawar the 21st January 1947
17/6-BI

From

Norwef, Peshawar.

To

Homein, New Delhi.

Subject: Central Assembly Question.

MESSAGE

Reference your express letter No. 22/3/47-Poll (I), dated the 9th January 1947.

2. The Provincial Government suggest the following replies:

- (a) The activities of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh are known to Provincial Criminal Investigation Department who can furnish any information required.
- (b) The RSS Sangh is not a criminal organization. It has not shown any signs of being actively militant in the NWFP, although members have received training in physical exercises, sword and lathi play, musketry, and the throwing of balls which represent dummy grenades. In view of the fact that Hindus are a minority in this Province, such activities can only be for training in self defence.
- (c) The NWFP Government has not received any representation in regards to recent activities of the RSS Sangh.
- (d) Not in the NWF Province.
- (e) The RSS Sangh has numerous branches in the NWF Province at places where Hindus live. It has not been responsible for any riots in the NWF Province.
- (f) It is not considered that the activities of the Sangh in the NWF Province are of such a nature as to render it necessary to declare it an unlawful organization.

Chief Secretary to Government,
North West Frontier Province

EXPRESS LETTER

No. 292 C.61/47
Government of Bihar.
Political Department.
Special Section.

From

T.P. Singh, Esqr, ICS,
Under Secretary to Government

To

Home in, New Delhi

Patna, the 23rd January 1947

Reference Letter No. 22/3/47-Poll (I) dated the 9th January 1947 regarding a question to be put up in the Central Assembly by Mr Ahmed E.H. Jaffar on the subject of Rastriya Sewak Sangh. There is no organization of this name in Bihar but presumably the reference is to the organization known as Rastriya Swayam Sewak Sangh. The information which is supplied below is based on this assumption.

(b) The Rastriya Swayam Sewak Sangh is a purely communal organization whose avowed object is to organize Hindus into a disciplined militant body capable of resisting anything considered detrimental to the cause of the Hindus. It aims at organizing the Hindu youths and giving physical training and claims to have nothing to do with politics. It is reported to have recently refused an offer of amalgamation with the Hindu Mahasabha. It teaches Hindu History and Culture at various centres and also imparts physical training including the use of lathi. There is nothing on record to show that it is a criminal organization, though it can be safely presumed that it will be naturally in the fore-front of any fight between communities.

(c) The answer is in the negative.

(d) The answer is in the negative; on the contrary there has been considerable increase in the number of members of the Sangh following the recent communal disturbances.

(e) The Sangh has several branches all over the Province but there is nothing to show that it was at all responsible for the recent communal riots in Bihar.

(f) The Provincial Government do not consider that the Sangh should be banned as such a course cannot be justified. In any case, it can not be banned unless similar action is taken against the Muslim National Guard, its Muslim counter part.

The Provincial Government do not think that the Sangh constitutes a threat to the Public peace.

The Provincial Government do not think that it is necessary to appoint a Committee to investigate the activities of the Rastriya Swayam Sewak Sangh.

T.P. Singh

Under Secretary to the Government

....EXPRESS LETTER

SECRET

From

A.A. Said, Esquire, MA, LLB (Cantab), Bar-at-Law,
Home Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Delhi.

To,

The Secretary to the Government of India,
Home Department, New Delhi.

No. F. 26/47-C

Dated Delhi, the 25th January 1947.

Reference Mr Bedekar's express letters No. 22/3/47-Poll.(I)., dated the 9th January 1947, regarding the question proposed to be put in the Central Assembly by Mr Ahmed E.H. Jaffer. I am directed to furnish the following material for reply to parts (b) to (e) of the question and to offer the comments asked for on sections (a) and (f) thereof;

- (b) The Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh is a communal volunteer body organized in semi-military lines and its members believe in what may be described as militant Hinduism.
- (c) A number of representations have from time to time been received in this office against the activities of the Sangh.
- (d) It is understood that some Congress Hindus have recently left the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh, but the reasons for their doing so as well as the numbers and other details, are not available.
- (e) The Sangh has several branches in all parts of the Delhi Province. It is understood that instructions were received that the Sangh as such was not to participate in the recent communal riots in Delhi. There were, however, individual cases of members of the Sangh taking part in the disturbances.

Comments on sections (a) and (f)

- (a) The Chief Commissioner is of the opinion that no useful purpose will be served by appointing a committee to investigate the activities of the Sangh, as the leaders of the organizations have taken special precautions to ensure secrecy. Whatever information is procured by Special Branches of the CID is passed on to the Government of India from time to time. An open enquiry on the other hand, is likely to prove futile.
- (f) Unilateral action against the Sangh only would not be desirable but a ban on it and all of the similar organizations, for example, Muslim National Guards would do much to prevent communal trouble.

A.A. Said
Home Secretary
to the Chief Commissioner, Delhi.

...EXPRESS.

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

Letter No. C.8/47/10

Shillong, the 29th January 1947

From

The Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam,

To

The Secretary to the Government of India,
Home Department.

Sir,

With reference to Mr Bedakar's secret letter No. 22/3-47-Poll (I) dated the 9th January 1947 forwarding copy of a question proposed to be put in the Central Assembly by Mr Ahmed E. H. Jaffer, I am directed to say as regards parts (b) to (e) that this government have until recently received no reports of activity by the Sangh in Assam. It is reported by the Special Superintendent of Police, CID, Assam that Dadaji Paramaratha, All-India Organizer of Rashtriya Sevaka Sangh, visited Shillong in the early part of December 1946 and started a Branch of the Sangh in Shillong. Shri Mulkaranji, a worker of the said Sangh is now imparting training to 40 members in moral principles and physical education. There was previously no organization of this Sangh in Assam nor is there any other organization now other than that described above.

2. As regards parts (a) and (f) of the aforesaid question, I am to say that this Government do not feel able to advise on these suggestions in the light of present information.

Chief Secretary to the Govt of Assam.

EXPRESS LETTER
No. A 219-XXV/CX

From

A.R. Sinclair-Day Esq,
Deputy Secretary to Government,
United Provinces.

To

Home in,
New Delhi

Confidential

Department

Dated Lucknow, 31 January, 1947

Reference Homein Express Letter No. 22/3/47-Poll (I), dated 9 January, 1947, regarding an Assembly question about the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh. The following material is furnished for parts (b) to (e) of the question:

- (b) The RSS Sangh is a Hindu organization which aims at organizing the Hindus ostensibly for purposes of defence. Its headquarters are at Nagpur, and Lucknow is the nucleus of the Provincial organization. The routine activities of the Sangh consist of parades and lathi exercises and instruction in the use of swords and spears. At the training camps practice in sham fighting and tactical exercises is also given. The members are sworn to secrecy but are encouraged to inform the public of the aims and objects of the Sangh.

This organization is looked upon with considerable suspicion by the Muslims who regard its activities as a threat to their own safety. Recent reports indicate a considerable increase in its activities and also in its membership. The total strength in the United Provinces has increased from 10,225 in April 1946 to 25,056 in December 1946. Towards the end of December 1946 training camps attended by 100 to 2000 volunteers were held in various districts of the Province.

- (c) The only representation received by this Government is a telegram dated 5 June, 1946, from a Muslim resident of Bareilly, which is to the effect that the Rashtriya Swayama Sewak Sangh is a menace to the public.
- (d) This Government have no information.
- (e) The Sangh is an all-India organization with branches in several districts of this province as regards the latter part of this question, this government have no information which may suggest that the Sangh is responsible for the communal disorders in the country.

2. The Provincial Government have no comments to offer on part (a) of the question, and in regard to (f) would suggest that as the Sangh is not the only organization of its kind, any action to be taken in this matter should be directed against all 'private armies'.

A.R. Sinclair-Day
Deputy Secretary.



9. Organization of Hindustan National Guards

Letter from General Secretary, AIHM, to All Provincial Hindu Sabhas, 21 February 1947

AIHM Papers, File No C-165, NMML.

Hindu Mahasabha Bhawan
Reading Road,
New Delhi

To,
The General Secretary,
Provincial Hindu Sabha

Dear Sir,

You have doubtless received our circular letter regarding Malaviya Hindu Sangathan Fund. I trust you are moving in the matter. I am expecting from you a communication as to when you desire the President to tour in your province, for mobilizing public opinion about the present political situation and also for helping you in collections to the Malaviya Fund.

You are requested to take immediate steps for organizing Hindusthan National Guards. The situation now calls for intensive internal re-organization. It is apparent that we have not so far attracted sufficient number of young men to our ranks. There has been a general complaint that we lack any concrete tangible programme which might appeal to the young men and which they may be called upon to undertake from day to day. The Hindusthan National Guard provides an opportunity for such constructive service. If the Guard is properly organized it will provide us with sufficient number of militant workers who will take up our work in rural areas and many of whom will be trained to under take work involving initiative and leadership. I trust, you will realize the significance of such an exclusive body of volunteers wedded to the ideals and programme of the Hindu Mahasabhas through service and suffering. I shall be glad if you kindly intimate to this office what practical steps you have taken or are taking in organizing the Guards.

You are requested to furnish to this office a list of members of your Working Committee as well as of your present office-bearers with their addresses. You are also requested to send a comprehensive list containing the names and addresses of Presidents and Secretaries of all district and sub-divisional Sabhas within your province. I would request you to furnish the list within a fortnight.

Trusting to receive an early reply,

Yours faithfully,
Ashutosh Lahiry
General Secretary



10. Report from Bombay Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report from Bombay for the Second Half of February 1947, 3 March 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/2/47, NAI.

Note showing the development of Volunteer Organizations in Bombay Province.

1. Rashtra Seva Dal:

Six more branches of this Dal have been opened. Their strength varies from 30 to 135.

In Bombay City the Dal has an inner group of about 125 well-trained and experienced volunteers known as Jai Prakash Dal.

In addition to usual activities, such as training in drill, physical training exercises, maintenance of order at festivals, and others, the Dal held three rallies at Ahmedabad at which the volunteers were advised to take more interest in the organization, to maintain discipline and to follow the Congress creed and policy.

A big rally was also held by the Dal at Satara on 1st and 2nd February, under the presidentship of Capt Shah Nawaz, ex-INA. About 13,000 volunteers from Maharashtra, Deccan States and Karnataka attended it. Several speakers, including Congress Socialists and Forward Blocists, addressed the gathering urging the volunteers to strengthen the Dal with a view to achieving freedom. The volunteers displayed physical exercises, Indian games, lezim, construction of nuts and bridges, and other things, and gave a demonstration in first aid to the injured.

Note—This organization wields considerable influence and may be regarded as potentially dangerous in the event of political disturbances.

2. Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh:

Six more branches were opened with membership ranging from 20 to 50

The volunteers carried on their usual activities.

3. Khaksar Volunteer Corps:

Except in Poona where about 150 Khaksars organized a camp between 15th and 17th February to try to revive local interest, the organization was inactive throughout the province.

Note—It wields no influence, but is potentially dangerous.

4. Muslim National Guards:

Four new branches were opened.

Usual training in lathi, drill and physical exercise was imparted.

To protest against the ban imposed on their organization by the Punjab Government, they took out a procession at Sholapur, organized a 'hartal' at Godhra and held a meeting in Poona. At a private meeting held at Ahmedabad they decided to send a batch of volunteers to help the Satyagrahis in the Punjab, but the Chief of the National Guards for India told them to be prepared when called upon in case of necessity.

In Bombay City, the Guards continued to do relief work at various relief centres and to keep order at Muslim meetings. Some Guards had approached their Commandant and requested him to permit them to go to the Punjab to take part in the civil disobedience movement there. In the absence of orders from Mr Jinnah and the Chief Commander, their request was refused.

5. Congress Seva Dal:

A new branch has been opened in Bombay City and about 35 volunteers have been enrolled in this branch.

6. Lok Sena:

A rally was held on 9th February and the volunteers gave a demonstration of physical exercises.

7. Bombay National Guards:

The Guards celebrated their eleventh anniversary on 6th February.

8. Samata Sainik Dal:

There is a marked increase in membership, but no special activities were noticed.

It wields influence in Nasik and Poona districts only and is not so potentially dangerous.

9. Azad Hind Dal:

The membership has decreased considerably. It has no influence. In Bombay City rallies were held at three places and Col Ehsan Quadir, who is touring India for the purpose of coordinating the activities of the Dal, came to Bombay to place the Dal on a sound footing.

NB—There was no appreciable activity by the other volunteer organizations.

Statement showing the strength of the organizations in the month of February 1947.

1. Rashtra Seva Dal. ...	53,398
2. Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh. ...	28,056
3. Khaksar Volunteer Corps. ...	230
4. Muslim National Guards. ...	15,149
5. Congress Seva Dal....	1,500
6. Independent Labour Party, Volunteer Corps. ...	1,065
7. Rashtriya Seva Samiti ...	195
8. Hindu Rashtra Dal. ...	50
9. Lok Sena. ...	1,825
10. Bombay National Guards. ...	125
11. Swastika League Volunteer Corps....	200
12. Arya Vir Dal. ...	250
13. Red Guards. ...	800
14. Samata Sainik Dal....	10,295
15. Azad Hind Dal....	620
16. Sikh Nav Javan Dal. ...	200

11. Muslim National Guards Create Panic in Chittagong

Telegram from Ahmad Saghir Chowdhry to M.A. Jinnah, 5 March 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, p. 191.

CHITTAGONG,

Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah, Mount Pleasant, Malabar Hill, Bombay.

Twenty businessmen purchased all motor vehicles depot Chittagong from disposals. Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury, Secretary, District Muslim League demanded five lac rupees donations. On

refusal of such unreasonable demand he utilized National Guards, entered my cinema house, destroyed everything causing damages more than a lac. My car worth rupees ten thousand burnt. Alhaj Islam Khan's business firm destroyed by throw of homes [*sic*] bricks. Moulvi Nazir Ahmad Chowdhury's car destroyed. Complete lawlessness prevails. Great panic in town, life property unsafe. National Guards threatening murder [and] loot. Please interfere without delay. Veteran Muslim Leaguers going massacred [*sic*]. Ask Salar-i-A'la interfere. Reply.

AHMAD SAGHIR CHOWDHURY

12. Report from CP and Berar

Extract from the Fortnightly Report from CP and Berar for the Second Half of February 1947, 8 March 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/2/47, NAI.

... 5. Volunteer Organizations:

Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh: There has been an increase in membership during the period under review. 19 new branches have been started in different parts of the province including a womens' branch at Mandla. Routine activities comprise physical exercises including those with lathi, dagger and sword. Speeches explaining the importance of physical fitness and the need for extending the organization in view of the communal situation was made at a few private meetings; parades were held at Jubbulpore, Katni, Raipur and Damoh, and marching drill practised at Chhindwara, Seoni and Saugor. At intellectual training classes, the implications of the Constituent Assembly, the necessity for the removal of untouchability and the desirability of protection of Hindu religion and culture were explained. At meetings in Amraoti and Katni, the Punjab Government were criticized for declaring the Sangh an unlawful organization. The branches at Nagpur, Kamptee, Chanda, Wardha and Bhandara celebrated their anniversaries by games, tournaments demonstrations of physical training and intellectual classes. The present political situation was explained and volunteers were urged to protect Hindu women and were told their responsibility for the protection of Hinduism and opposition to the vivisection of the country. The abolition of the caste system was advocated and the hope was expressed that members would fight for the integrity of India.

Azad Hind Dal: The branches at Kamptee and Saoner (Nagpur) registered an increase in membership. 7 new branches were started in Nagpur, Betul, Hoshangabad and Jubbulpore districts. The formation of Azad Hind Dals was the main topic at some Congress meetings and at Patan (Drug) Subash Bose's birthday was utilized for Azad Hind Dal propaganda and speakers at a public meeting advocated the formation of dals in every village as independence will have to be fought for.

Muslim League National Guards: A new branch was formed at Katni (Jubbulpore). About 40 out of 100 applicants who signed enlistment forms with their own blood were accepted at Drug. Parades were held regularly and squad drill performed at various centres. About 40 volunteers of Katni moved out in a procession on cycles to protest against the arrest of League leaders in the Punjab and the ban imposed on the Muslim League National Guards by the Punjab Government. The President of the City Muslim League addressing some 300 men of the Muslim League National Guards on the occasion of the Prophet's birthday appealed to the

audience to be ready to proceed to the Punjab to vindicate the Muslim League cause against tyranny and oppression.

Samata Sainik Dal: A branch of the Dal was started at Mul (Chanda). The chief centres of activity of this institution were the branches in Chanda and Nagpur districts, where physical exercises were performed and marching and drilling done.

Hindustan Red Army: Membership is on the increase. New branches were formed at Chipabar (Hoshangabad), Karanja (Akola) and Buldana. A secret meeting of the local commanders was held at Nagpur at which Shyamnarain Kashmiri made suggestions in regard to the improvement of the organization by the appointment of NCOs, the formation of two full Companies comprising 700 volunteers and the publication of progress reports in the Marathi 'Inquilab' the organ of the Congress Socialist Party. In addition to the routine activities of parades and physical exercises, 'Shankar Memorial Day' was observed; a procession was taken out during the Subash Bose's birthday celebrations and the 'Independence Day' observed. About 200 volunteers of the Hindustan Red Army and Vir Bajrang Dal in uniform gave a demonstration of squad drill and were afterwards exhorted by Maganlal Bagdi to keep the memory of Shankar who had been hanged for the murder of a police constable, and follow his methods of securing freedom. In Akola, members visited villages and carried on anti-Ministry propaganda saying that the present Government consisting of capitalist Congressmen was indifferent to the needs of the poor. An officers' training corps was convened at Nagpur for a week, the main features of which were instructions in map reading by Shyamnarain Kashmiri and demonstration in bayonet fighting. It is reported that dummy guns were secured and real bayonets were fixed to the guns for training.

13. Organization of Home Guards

Extract from G.B. Pant's Speech in the UP Legislative Assembly, 19 March 1947

B.R. Nanda (Ed.), *Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant*, Vol. XI, pp. 296-7.

...You might be knowing that we have prepared a scheme to organize Home Guards. Its object is that while the police is busy in its routine duty and is moving about, a strong force of volunteers should be always available for the maintenance of peace. ... Now Home Guard units are being established at Allahabad, Varanasi, Bareilly, Agra, Kanpur, Gorakhpur, Meerut and several other places. A special officer has been deputed for this work. Advertisements have also been issued for the recruitment of commandants and other officers. I hope very soon a cadre of officers will be created and people of all classes and communities and even of different political persuasions will come forward to join the Home Guard units so that a national force is available to enable us to maintain peace in the province. An effective implementation of the scheme will be of great help to the police and there will also be no need to increase the police force. Those who join the Home Guard units will gain self-confidence as they will learn how to use arms, and will also become disciplined.

These days many voluntary organizations are being formed in this and other provinces to carry on constructive works and to go to the masses and try to raise their standard of living. But if there is any private organization of volunteers meant to defend any particular group of people against some other group, it should be condemned. In fact, if the Government does its job well, there should be no need to raise private organizations of volunteers. Even for self-protection,

such forces should not be raised. But unfortunately there is a tendency to raise such forces with the object of coercing some sections of people. This tendency is harmful to society.

On the other hand, the Home Guards force will afford protection to every section of people and also help in creating an atmosphere of mutual goodwill in the province. Hence I hope the honourable members will fully cooperate with the Government in making this scheme a success. Once a beginning is made, there is no reason why this force should not grow rapidly and become a big force. We should not forget that, whatever our differences, the maintenance of peace is of paramount importance. If all sections of people do not work towards this end it cannot be realized. If someone or the other keeps on igniting the fire, it cannot be extinguished even if others keep on dousing the flames. Hence the only proper course for us is to work together to make the Home Guards scheme a success and thus help in establishing a lasting peace in the province.

The Home Guards scheme, which is based on the spirit of cooperation between different communities, will have a great moral effect on the people. If a riot breaks out in a town, the very presence of a body of armed persons representing all communities and political parties will put a damper on the evil designs of unruly elements and the rioting will cease automatically. I hope all the members will realize the importance of the scheme and approve of it....

Chapter 11. Minorities

1. Separate Political Representation for Depressed Classes

1 January 1947

Report from *Dawn* as cited in Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, *Writings and Speeches*, Vol. XVII, Part 2, pp. 285–6.

After a month of patient labour in Britain where he met leading members of the Govt as well as of the opposition, Dr Ambedkar, the Scheduled Castes leader, has returned to India where his main work lies. The trip to London was undertaken in order to place his community's case before the British Public in a realistic manner. Congress propaganda for the last several years has created a wrong picture of the existing divisions in the country and even the Cabinet Mission was taken in by its false presentation of facts.

The All India Scheduled Castes Federation is the representative organization of the Community and Congress has come in as an interloper to disrupt the strength and solidarity of the organization. The statement by the Cabinet Mission members in the House of Commons that the Congress represented the Scheduled Castes is correct only to the extent that this powerful political organization backed up with its immense resources succeeded in capturing many seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes. That did not mean that the true representatives of the community have been returned to the various legislatures.

Dr Ambedkar's immediate task in Britain was to demolish this myth and he has done it in the memorandum which he has submitted to the British political leaders. The memorandum itself has not been published but from the interview Dr Ambedkar gave on his arrival in Karachi it is clear that he has gained some measure of success in his mission. He has established personal contacts with several leading personalities in Britain including Mr Attlee and Mr Churchill, and he speaks confidently that when the matter comes to be examined by the Parliament at the time of passing the Act transferring sovereignty some definite steps are sure to be taken to ascertain the real wishes of the Minorities as to the safeguards they need. It is also cheering to hear from the Doctor that there is not only a great deal of sympathy among the British Public for the Scheduled Castes' cause but also general resentment that the Cabinet Mission should have ignored the claims of the community. Even among the labour party people the feeling is said to be growing whether after all what the labour Government has done for the solution of the Indian constitutional problem is the right thing to do. This is certainly a gain for once the British public gives up wishful thinking and faces the realities of the Indian situation, solution of the Indian problem should become less difficult.

Dr Ambedkar insists on separate political representation for the Depressed Classes as the only means by which their dispute with the Congress can be settled and once this is granted, he thinks, there will be absolute peace between the Congress and the Scheduled Castes. As

one who has suffered in his earlier days from Caste Hindu tyranny and ostracism he cannot easily be brought round to trust the Upper Classes among the Hindus nor can he safely place the destiny of his community to their tender mercies. Adequate statutory protection of their rights against Caste Hindu encroachments is a wise course that dictates his line of action. He says, he is wedded to constitutional means of seeking redress of his community's grievances and only after they have been exhausted will he look to other courses. Here is the olive branch extended to the Congress.

The Scheduled Castes leader has denied any secret pact between the Scheduled Castes Federation and the Muslim League. What pact secret or otherwise, can there be except that they are both alive to the common peril that faces them and the country by the inposition [*sic*] of Caste Hindu Congress rule over this sub-continent? The character and Composition of the Congress leadership is such that it has given grave fears among wide sections of the people and if the League and Scheduled Castes are drawn together, it is out of a realization of the common danger and how best to face it in the general interest and well being of the people as a whole. The life of the Depressed Classes in this country has been that of slaves for ages and they are determined to end it. It is for them to decide as to how best they can do it and not for the Congress to dictate.

2. Safeguards for Minority Rights

Extracts from the Proceedings of Bengal Provincial Buddhist Association, 6 January 1947

AICC Papers, File No. CL-3 (Part 3)/ 1946-47, NMML.

To

The President,
The Indian National Congress,
New Delhi.

Sir,

I am directed by the Governing Body of the Bengal Provincial Buddhist Association to forward herewith a copy of Extracts from the Proceedings of a meeting of the said Governing Body dated the 5th January, 1947 for your information and request you to exert your influence for taking necessary action in the matter.

I have the honour to be,
Sir

Your most obedient servant.
Nirmal Chandra Baruya
General Secretary.

Enclosure

Extract from the proceedings of a meeting of the Governing Body of the Bengal Provincial Buddhist Association held on the 5th January, 1947, at the office of the Association at 123A, Dharamtala Street, Calcutta:

'Resolution No. 1. The Bengal Provincial Buddhist Association while welcoming the inaugural address by Dr Rajendra Prosad as permanent President of the Indian Constituent Assembly on

the 11th December 1946 and his views on the programme of framing a “model constitution” for an independent and free India, which “will satisfy the people of all groups and communities and religions inhabiting this vast land,” considers that in successfully working out such a constitution worthy of the name, much greater emphasis should be placed on securing “special safeguards” for the smaller minorities including the Buddhists. No doubt, the Buddhists of India today have dwindled down to a little over five lacs of people. Still their cultural and international importance can hardly be ignored. They are, however, to be found in their largest number in the Province of Bengal where they form a distinctly separate community by religion, culture, tradition, social status, manners and customs and temperament. The Buddhists of Bengal consisting of diverse races speaking the different dialects, are recognized as a “minority community” by the Government and their population is 1,46,000, which is evidently larger than that of the Anglo-Indians and the Indian Christians of the Province and also that of the Parsees in the whole of India, while including the non-regulated Tribal Areas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Darjeeling their number is about four lacs. This Association therefore notes with considerable concern the present unsatisfactory position of the Buddhists in the field of constitutional changes of their country, which is due to the unwise and irresponsible action of the Bengal Congress Parliamentary Board because the latter failed to consider favourably the legitimate claims for Buddhist representation in the Constituent Assembly which is a Constitution-making body, in spite of the fact that even on population basis the Buddhists represent a comparatively larger recognized minority in Bengal.

Resolution No. 2. This Association considers that responsibility for safeguarding the interests of all minority communities including the Buddhists is essentially that of the Constituent Assembly and the Indian National Congress, which claims to represent all communities and sections of people of India. This Association would strongly urge that there should be an early revision of the existing Congress policy with a view to enable all communities and sections of people of India including the Buddhists to participate in the great work of framing her future constitution the success of which depends on mutual trust, good will and co-operation of all concerned.

Resolution No. 3. This Association urges that there should be implemented immediately the recommendation on “special safeguards for minorities” envisaged in paragraph 20 of the British Cabinet Mission’s Proposals as embodied in the statement by the Secretary of the State for India on the 16th May, 1946, and having regard to the importance to the cultural, educational and religious contributions of the Buddhists of this country, this Association stresses the need for adequate Buddhist representation both in the Constituent Assembly and in the Minorities’ Advisory Committee before their arriving at final decision on fundamental rights and interests of this community.

Resolution No. 4. This Association desires to impress upon the Constituent Assembly that the Buddhists are in favour of a united and undivided free India under a single constitution with separate constituencies for minority communities including the Buddhists, with reservation of seats for election of Buddhist representatives to the Central Legislatures of India and to the Provincial Legislatures of Bengal.

Resolution No. 5. This Association stresses the desirability that the parts and tracts that are now treated as excluded Tribal Areas such as those in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Darjeeling, which are inhabited mainly by the Buddhists, should be granted franchise [*sic*] rights so that the

Buddhist dwellers therein may send up their own representatives by election along with their co-religionists who have already been granted franchise [*sic*] rights.

Resolution No. 6. Resolved that copies of the foregoing resolutions, Nos. 1 to 5, be forwarded to the President, Indian Constituent Assembly, to the President, Indian National Congress, to Dr Syamaprosad Mookerjee and other leading Members concerned with a request to take necessary action in the matter.'

N.C. Baruya
General Secretary

3. Appeal to Recognize Gurkhas in India as a Minority Community

Letter from the All India Gurkha League to J.B. Kripalani, 20 January 1947
AICC Papers, File No. CL-3 (Part 2)/1946-47, NMML.

Darjeeling

Pujya Rastrapati Jie,

I have the honour to append hereby the resolutions passed in a public meeting held on Saturday, the 18th instant in Darjeeling under the auspices of the All-India Gurkha League, for your kind perusal and favour.

Resolution I

'Resolved that three million Gurkhas, domiciled in India, having their own linguistic, cultural and racial separateness residing in India for the last several centuries, be recognized as a Minority Community for the safeguard of their peculiar rights by the All-India National Congress to whom the Gurkhas, as represented by the All-India Gurkha League, are pledged to fight for the complete freedom of India and for the security of a united India. If recognized as a minority community, the All-India Gurkha League, on behalf of the three million Gurkhas, assures the All-India National Congress that they will not be an anti-national force but rather they will be instrumental in cementing the national edifice in India torn by the abominable communalism.'

Resolution 2.

'Resolved that the copy of the above resolution be forwarded to,

1. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Vice-President, the Interim Govt of India
2. Acharya J.B. Kripalani, the President, AICC.
3. HH the Maharaja of Nepal for information and necessary action'

Yours sincerely,
T. Manaen
Secretary
All India Gurkha League



4. Anglo-Indians Wish to Join the Muslim League

Letter from W.B. Scott to M.A. Jinnah, 26 February 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, p. 93.

32 Marquis Street, Calcutta

My dear Sir,

Pardon my troubling you. Since Anglo-Indians and Muslims have been neighbours together, it is, therefore, nothing but right [that] we should both join hands together [*sic*] in New India.

I understand that owing to a certain Rule, Anglo-Indians are not allowed to become members of the League. Will you kindly consider this point and I request the favour of your kindly issuing such order as your good self thinks fit and proper whereby Anglo-Indians can become members of the League.

Anxiously awaiting for [*sic*] a favourable reply at your convenience.

Trusting no offence is taken,

Yours obediently,
 W.B. Scott

5. 'Muslims Will Establish Pakistan in Punjab: What Will Stone Gods Give Us?—Mandal'

Dawn, 6 March 1947.

AGRA, Tuesday.—**The UP SCHEDULED CASTES FEDERATION CONFERENCE was held at Firozabad, on 1 and 2 March with the Hon'ble J.N. Mandal, Law Member, Interim Govt, participating. About 3,000 delegates came from all parts of UP. Besides the delegates nearly 25,000 visitors and Mr Raj Bhoj, General Secretary of the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation, Mr Shastri (Bombay), Mr Gopi Chand Pipal (Agra), Chaudhri Parushram (Aligarh), Mr Karan Singh Ken, Ex-Parliamentary Secretary, UP Government, Dr Manik Chand, Ex-MLA, UP, were present.**

Mr Mandal, in his speech, laid stress on Hindu-Muslim unity. He said: 'When I have established personal relations between Scheduled Castes and Muslims I see no reason why Mr Gandhi can not [*sic*] do so.'

Through communal award the Scheduled Castes were allowed separate electorates, but Mr Gandhi said, he would give his life but would not permit that. Then in Poona Pact, Dr Ambedkar signed a death warrant for Scheduled Castes, which he repents even now.

Referring to His Majesty's statement dated 20 February, he said: 'Pakistan will be established in the Punjab under the Muslim League and N-W Provinces will not remain aloof from the League.'

He said: 'I do not believe in stone gods. Mr Gandhi, who is our enemy No. 1, wants to engage our attention in opening temples for us. But may I know what stone gods will give us?'

'We want political power, separate electorates, representation in services, trade, commerce, and schools for our children and not merely entry in the temples. Mr Gandhi calls us Harijans, "creatures of God". Are Mr Gandhi and Jawaharlal not creatures of God? Why do not they call themselves Harijans?'

'I have joined hands with the League because the Muslims and Scheduled Castes are both poor and backward. They are mostly labourers and agriculturists at least in Bengal and need immense relief. So no law will be made for the good of Muslims, which will not be beneficial to the Scheduled Castes. I joined the League Ministry in Bengal. They gave me three Ministers, three Parliamentary Secretaries and ten lakhs of rupees for education. When Qaed-e-Azam took me into the Interim Government, I made it clear that I will work for the Scheduled Castes, and there was no objection. We were given seats without any condition.'

'The Hindus, who call us Hindus have given us no concession so far. They always opposed us. Sir Cripps who is a best friend of the Congress did not even recognize our right to self-determination.'

Mr Mandal appreciated the idea of the Federation to organize Satyagrah against the UP Government from 25 March. He regretted the Ministers did not care to reply to the memorandum submitted by the Scheduled Castes Federation on their demands.

At a reception given in his honour Mr Mandal said that Mr Jinnah is not only the leader of the Muslims but of all the minorities in India. He is the biggest man of India.

6. Unite Minorities behind the Muslim League

Letter from L. Lobo to M.A. Jinnah, 18 March 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 281-2.

44 Islampura Street, Golpita, Bombay

Dear Sir,

As I write this with great avidity and impatience, I cannot forbear discovering the same impatience in thanking you immensely for the trouble in reading my epistle.

I am intensely happy to be in the knowledge [*sic*] that the League is open to members of the Minorities as well and it is the dearest wish of my heart to be a partner in such a worthy organization. I therefore approach you with the pledge that henceforth I shall dedicate my services to the cause of the Muslims and the Minorities.

I had thought it futile to plunge into politics of our country but after much deliberations I am convinced that the Congress is on the wrong road to freedom and the only road to liberation is the one leading to Pakistan. On my way to this land of destiny I seek your aid and counsel which I do hope will be forthcoming from you with pleasure. If you will afford me the full support of my plans to band together the Minorities for the great struggle to form the Pakistan State, I am confident to succeed in my Sacred Mission.

I believe implicitly in Pakistan, the idea has possessed me and it is the only plan bearing practical operating value. What is preached by the Congress as the great road to freedom is for us indeed the high road to servitude. We shall not consent to remain serfs of Hindu Dictators for they stand for the indefinite promotion of Hindus alone with utter disregard to our welfare. Pakistan is the only defence against any designs of the Congress aimed at the destruction of the Muslims and Minorities.

The Congress is predominantly a Hindu organization having primarily a different racial attitude towards us and all the love in the world cannot wholly take away that knowledge from us. We shall not let them transform our country into a *Bania* Rule but shall stand united to crush Congress piracy. Our cause must prevail and is beyond moral challenge. Pakistan is our

destiny and without it hope would vanish from a restless and awakened India. We shall not let ourselves be dragged as captives by *Banias* but fight their idea of liberation. Our indomitable spirit and willing sacrifices shall prove to the world that we are worthy to hold the citadel against all aggressors.

If the Congress is an organization dedicated to the uplift of India there is no shorter cut to an understanding of their machinery than the tragic example of the Untouchables. How then can such an organization perpetuate the status of Muslims and Minorities? Let Congress understand that we know the time of day in the world we inhabit and we will not be fooled—no systematic propaganda can mislead us. Their grandiose plan to seize power and to overthrow us must be toned down. They are unfit to trust in action as in word, they have no virtues as partners in the difficult adventure of freedom and can never deal constructively with the affairs of our country. Their expedition is a tragedy of errors for they have met each crisis with an improvisation while patching the immediate breach has generated into new misunderstanding, thus bringing a useful cause into disrepute. If the Congress was so benevolent, so unselfish and so devoted to the public good we would tolerate their usurpation out of gratitude. But they have placed their own interests above national advancement and it is an impossible piece of Idealism. We have therefore no choice but to fight to keep the flag of Pakistan flying over the Citadel. My mission is to unite the Minority elements to collaborate with you and I await with much interest your immediate reply to enable me to contact you and discuss at length the progressive plan I have in view. May Providence grant you unbroken health to witness the birth and functioning of Pakistan is my prayer.

Yours faithfully,
L. Lobo

7. 'Part and Parcel of Hindu Community: Not Joining League—Eight Punjab Harijan MLAs' Statement'

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 21 March 1947.

LAHORE, 20 March.—The false propaganda which had been carried on against the Harijan Members of the Punjab Assembly of their alleged intention to join the Muslim League has been nailed to the counter by the eight Harijan MLAs in a joint statement issued by them today.... All these MLAs have solemnly declared their determination to stand by the Hindus and the Sikhs of the Punjab.

'Those who make false propaganda,' they say, 'that the Harijan MLAs are going to join the League or would join it in the near future are only the interested persons of the League itself.'

The Harijan MLAs say: 'We are of the firm conviction that the Pakistani Ministry is not the panacea of all the religious, moral, cultural, social, political and economic problems and a United India with a strong centre is its best solution. The disturbances in Bengal and the Punjab have shown that no difference was made between the caste Hindus and the Harijans thereby treating them alike. When at the time of miseries and sorrows we have been a part and parcel of the Hindu community it is too much to think that the temporary benefits and comforts of life would win us to the other side.'

The signatories are: Mr Prithvi Singh Azad, MLA, Member of the Constituent Assembly, Chaudhri Harbhaj Ram, MLA, Member of the Constituent Assembly, Chaudhri Sunder Singh, MLA, former Parliamentary Secretary, Chaudhri Matu Ram, MLA, Chaudhri Sant Ram, MLA, Chaudhri Mehr Chand, MLA, Chaudhri Prem Singh, MLA, and Chaudhri Sunder Lal, MLA.

Chapter 12. Refugees*

1. Relief Arrangements for NWFP

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Mehr Chand Khanna, 13 January 1947
SWJN, Vol. I, pp. 347–8.

New Delhi

My dear Mehr Chand,

I have just learnt that the tribal people in Hazara have submitted to our terms and, therefore, it is not necessary for any further action to be taken against them. This is good. But news from the settled areas of the province in Hazara continues to be bad. I am sure your Government is doing everything possible. I am rather worried about the fate of the refugees, more especially those who have gone over to Kashmir and near Muzaffarabad. Apparently no one looks after them there. Sardar Patel told me yesterday that he could arrange to have some money sent for relief work for these refugees, who are, I understand, principally Sikhs. I suggested to him that the money might be sent to you and you could make proper arrangements for their relief. I hope you will be able to do this.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

* The issue of refugees, relief and resettlement is interwoven with communalism in general. For more on these questions, see the chapter on communalism.

2. Rehabilitation of and Compensation for Riot Victims

Letter from S.N. Mozumdar to Home Department Enclosing a Memorandum, 25 January 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 22/1/47, NAI.

CONFIDENTIAL

EXPRESS LETTER
No. 300 C. 40/47
Government of Bihar.
Political Department.
Special Section.

From

S.N. Mozumdar, Esqr, ICS,
Chief Secretary to Government.

To

Homex, New Delhi.

Patna, the 25th January 1947.

Reference Express letter No. 22/1/47-Poll (I), dated the 3rd January 1947 from the Government of India, Home Department, regarding question Nos. 3 and 5 to be asked by Mr A.E.H. Jaffar in the Central Legislative Assembly. The information required by the Government of India is as under in so far as the province of Bihar is concerned:

Question D No. 3.

(a), (b) and (c)—The number of persons killed in communal riots during the period from the 2nd September 1946 to the 15th January 1947 was 4679 Muslims and 272 Hindus.

(d)—The instructions given by the Provincial Government were to disperse.

(e)—The answer is in the negative.

Question D No. 5.

(a)—A memorandum giving information regarding the measures taken by the Provincial Government in the matter of rehabilitation and compensation of the victims of the communal riots, is enclosed.

Chief Secretary to Government

**Government of Bihar
Political Department
Special Section**

MEMORANDUM

The Provincial Government promulgated the Harvesting of Paddy and Cultivation of Rabi Ordinance and deputed about 200 officers for this work. Instructions have also been issued to the local officers to assist the evacuees in harvesting the crop themselves with the help of armed force and vehicles.

Government have announced a house building grant on the average of Rs 250 per house leaving discretion to local officers to vary the amount according to requirement. The general policy is to meet the entire cost of repairing the houses damaged during the riots as far as

possible. The maximum limit has not been fixed but it is contemplated that amounts in excess of Rs 700 for any single house should be given as interest free loans. There will not, however, be a large number of houses in this category. In order to make the house-building programme more effective, arrangements for extensive supply of building materials like bamboos, wood door, planks, tiles, thatch, and other things, have been taken in hand. These will be stocked at control places from where they will be issued according to requirement and the cost adjusted against the grant sanctioned.

A rehabilitation grant of Rs 200 per family on the average has also been sanctioned which will be distributed by the District Officers after suitable enquiry. Here again discretion has been left to District Officers to vary the grant within this average according to the economic condition and estimate of damage suffered by the family.

Government have already placed at the disposal of the Relief Commissioner a sum of Rs 6,70,000 for expenditure on house building and rehabilitation.

A large number of Momins were affected by the riots and in order to rehabilitate them, special supplies of yarn have been made to them from time to time. An Industrial Home has also been set up at Patna with a number of looms to provide employment to the weavers for which they are paid at attractive rates.

Other problems arising out of the riots as maintenance of orphans and widows, education of students whose studies were affected by the riots and maintenance of abandoned cattle are receiving consideration.

A proclamation was issued on the 11th November declaring certain areas (the district of Patna, the Sadar subdivision of Chapra and the Johanabad subdivision of Gaya) as dangerous and disturbed areas under the Police Act of 1861. Press Notes followed inviting those who sustained injuries to apply for compensation under the terms of the Act.

Adequate military protection has been given to the disturbed areas. In addition the Army are patrolling certain roads and are also conducting flag marches. Government have sanctioned Addition Armed Police of nearly 2000 in strength recruited from ex-servicemen to replace the army. Collective fines have been imposed and are being imposed. Investigation of criminal cases are proceeding vigorously inspite of great difficulties of obtaining witnesses who have left the province in very large numbers. Improvement of communication in the disturbed areas is under consideration.

3. Muslim League Attitude Hampers Relief Work in Bihar

Letter from Vallabhbai Patel to Col N.S. Gill, 26 January 1947

SPC, Vol. IV, p. 223.

My dear Colonel Gill,

I have received your letter of the 22nd instant today, and I am glad that you have been able to convince Gandhiji of the usefulness of your plan and he has accepted your workers, though limited in number, for his work there.

I do not know what work your volunteers can do in Bihar. There is no trouble there, and if there is any trouble it is with regard to the relief and rehabilitation of the Muslim sufferers due to the obstructionist attitude of the Muslim League which has practically taken charge of the relief operations. The Government spends money through the Muslim League, and the Muslim League volunteers do not allow the evacuees to go back to their villages or discourage

them from doing so. No incident has taken place since the first week of the disturbances, and there is no question of any sense of insecurity now. However, I would have no objection to your sending your volunteers there if Gandhiji agrees. I cannot take the responsibility of doing any work in Bihar without his consent. He is sure to know about it and ask me about it, and I would have to explain. As I have told you, I keep nothing secret from him, and if you want me to finance this project you had better obtain his approval.

You are not right when you say that this work is not under Gandhiji, and therefore you can deal direct with me. He keeps his vigilant eye on the Bihar work also. You know recently the Bihar Ministry had sent a deputation to him to explain the work that they have been doing. He is in correspondence with them, and anything that happens in Bihar goes to him directly or indirectly immediately. You may, therefore, obtain his consent and I will do the needful.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

4. Bihar Refugees Migrate to Bengal

Text of Adjournment Motion by Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal in Central Legislative Assembly, c. January 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 24/1/47, NAI.

NOTES IN THE HOME DEPT.

Adjournment motion by Mr Sanyal

Motion

The necessity and duty on the part of the Government of India to advise His Excellency the Governor General in Council and other relevant authorities asking the latter to prevent migration of Bihar people into Bengal which has been taking place at the instance of and through the direct encouragement and assistance of the Government of Bengal.

Statement of facts

According to the reports of Provincial Governments about a lakh of refugees from Bihar have moved into Bengal and near about 2,200 families have gone from Bihar to Sind or are on the point of moving. It is not possible to have an exact idea of the number of persons that have moved out of Bihar unless the refugees who have moved have been or are regularly counted.

The Bengal Government have stated that they are not encouraging such migration.

Reason for opposing admission

The matter is not of urgent importance and the question affects two Provincial Governments and their conduct in relating to law and order and migration of refugees respectively.



5. Question of Compensation to Riot Victims

Telegram from the Assistant Secretary to Government of Bengal to Home Department,
Government of India, 1 February 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 22/1/47, NAI.

Government of Bengal, Home Department, Political.

From—Bengal, Calcutta.

To—Home in, New Delhi.

No. 422 - p., dated Calcutta, the 1st February 1947.

Reference Home Department Express letter No. 22/1/46-Poll (1), dated the 3rd January 1947 and in continuation of this Government Express letter No. 407-P., dated the 31st January 1947. A statement showing the position in Bengal with regard to rehabilitation and payment of compensation to riot victims is forwarded herewith as reply to Mr A.E.H. Jaffer's question D No. S5

31.1.-C, PN.1.2

Asstt Secy to the Govt of Bengal

Statement showing the position with regard to rehabilitation of and payment of compensation to the riot victims in this province.

Government have already decided that no compensation can be given out of provincial revenues for the losses or damages sustained by the people through communal disturbances.

They have however sanctioned the following kinds of financial help from their funds for the purpose of rehabilitation of riot-victims in Calcutta and other places:

I. Calcutta

Free grants not exceeding Rs 1,000 per individual or family to

- (a) persons of small means, having their own places of business or exercising their profession, trade or calling independently, who have lost their means of livelihood through riot; and
- (b) small salaried employees whose earning capacity has been impaired by loss of property during the riots. These grants are intended to assist persons in both the above categories in the replacement of household effects and repair of bustee dwellings. They are also intended to assist persons in clause (a) in the replacement of lost stock-in-trade and equipment and persons in clause (b) with replacement of personal effects necessary to their earning capacity.

Mr N.L. Hindlay ICS, has been appointed as the adjudicator for the purpose of assessment and payment of the grants. The work of assessment has almost been completed and the payment will commence shortly.

II. Other places.

- (a) Free grants up to Rs 250 per family to indigent persons for reconstruction of or repair to their destroyed or damaged huts. In special cases the local officer have power to raise the limit to Rs 350 per family. In both the cases however the amounts are inclusive of the values of the building materials issued, if any.

- (b) In Credit-worthy cases, interest free loans up to Rs 250 per loan for the same house building purposes. The maximum period for repayment of the loans in 10 years.
- (c) Free grants not exceeding Rs 200 per grant to small traders and artisans who have lost their means of livelihood as a result of communal disturbances to enable them to restart their respective vocations grants at higher rates may be given for the purpose on merits of special cases.
- (d) Small grants to necessitous persons for purchase of lost utensils.

6. 'Hazara Situation Normal: *Refugees Returning*'

The Tribune, 4 February 1947.

PESHAWAR, 3 Feb.—The situation in the Hazara district is now normal and the refugees have started returning to their villages, excepting in snow-bound area where rehabilitation is not possible for some time. This information was given to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Education Member in the Interim Government, who made telephonic enquiry last night from Mr Mehr Chand Khanna, Minister, Frontier Government about the situation in Hazara.

Mr Khanna told Maulana Azad that for those refugees belonging to this snow-bound areas relief camp accommodating about 3,000 persons had been established for the...period where all possible facilities including food, other essentials of life, medical aid and education for both boys and girls had been provided by the provincial Government. Offenders were being apprehended, searches being made and stolen property being recovered. Peace committees had also been formed.

Mr Mehr Chand Khanna is expected to visit the spot shortly to personally study the situation.—API

7. Relief for Refugees in Bihar

Letter from Col N.S. Gill to Vallabhbhai Patel, 5 February 1947
SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 224–6.

Achint
 PO Bankipore (Patna)
 5 February 1947

My dear Sardarji,

I enclose herewith copies of letters (i) from Gandhiji to Mr Suhrawardy, (ii) from Mr Suhrawardy to Mr Jafar Imam, MLA. This explains the present position. Gandhiji's letter was written after further talks with me so as to leave no reason for doubts now or in future.

The two letters made it compulsory for me to come here and I arrived this morning. I have already met many Muslim leaders, including Syed Abdul Aziz. They appear very keen on taking me round and are making all arrangements. Needless to say, I have no comments to make yet. I have over a dozen men and lady volunteers here but these are lying quiet yet. In all probability I have to go back to report to Gandhiji and only then launch on any work here if at all necessary. But even if no future work is to be done here the commitment here stands for this month as by the time I report to Gandhiji and finally decide about this place it will be about the end of this month and I have to keep these volunteers here till that date. I can meet

the expenses of the party here including travelling and other things, at a cost of Rs 3,000. So, would you be good enough to send me a cheque for that amount at the address here earliest possible? The cheque can be made payable preferably here at Patna or at Calcutta.

As regards the work in Noakhali, line 3 of Mr Suhrawardy's letter amounts to consent in writing. So Gandhiji can utilize my workers for as long as they are useful and I hope they will stay there till his mission succeeds.

I am almost certain when I say that I shall not call upon you for any further amounts. If there is to be no work here then with these Rs 3,000 I will wind up the party here and meet their expenses right to their houses. If the work is to be done (with Gandhiji's approval of course) then this sum will enable me to carry on till the end of this month....

I myself wanted to come back after having settled it in Noakhali—but in fairness you will agree I had to come here and it would have been an unhappy way to leave this alone.

This explains the situation up to date. Will you please send me (i) the amount Rs 3,000, (ii) any instructions regarding here at this address but earliest possible, please?

... I do hope Sikhs will solidly remain with the Congress. How I want to organize the Sikh youth and they are crying for it too! The rest I will reserve till our next meeting.

I do hope you have fully recovered your health.

Yours affectionately,
Niranjan Singh Gill

ENCLOSURE I

GANDHI'S LETTER TO H.S. SUHRAWARDY

Kazirkhil
Ramganj P.S.
Noakhali District
28 January 1947

Sardar Niranjan Singh Gill has told me of all the talk he had with you. He says whilst you do not mind his men working in Noakhali you would doubt his bona fides until he with his men worked in Bihar just as assiduously as in Noakhali. In the circumstances I have told him that he should first go to Bihar and work there and in order to be able to do so effectively he should take from you a note of recommendation to the leader in Bihar of the League party. Unless he is so armed, I have told him, his work might, from the League point of view, fall flat. I added that he should keep himself in touch with you regarding his work there.

As to his work in Noakhali, I have told him that, regard being had to your views as interpreted by the Sardar, he should withdraw his men from Noakhali unless you approved of his work in Noakhali. It is not enough that you tolerate his men's work. It should have your written approval. His men can only be here as accepted friends of both Hindus and Muslims. I cannot entertain them on any other terms. I have told him too that he should find financial support, not from private sources including funds at my disposal, but he should, in order to be aboveboard, depend upon open public support. Therefore I have suggested to him too that, if you approve of his activity here, you should subscribe to his appeal even if it be a token rupee. But there may be difficulty in this of which I could have no knowledge even though you might approve of his activity in Noakhali.

ENCLOSURE II

40 Theatre Road
Calcutta
4 February 1947

My dear Jafar Imam Sahib,

You must have heard of Col Niranjana Singh Gill of the INA. He has been recently to Noakhali with my consent for the purpose of seeing things for himself and helping in the rehabilitation and the return of Hindu refugees. He took a fairly strong contingent of Sikhs with him. I have, however, been pressing upon him that he should go to Bihar also and see things for himself and then he will realize what has taken place and then I shall be in a position to discuss with him communal disturbances and the forms that they take and what should be done to prevent them. Lest his presence be misunderstood, he has asked me to give a letter of introduction to the Muslim leaders. As his motives are purely altruistic and he is anxious to serve in the cause of humanity, I am accordingly giving him this letter and hope that you will let everybody know so that there may be no mistake or apprehension regarding his presence there. I wish also that you might give him a correct picture of what has actually taken place and even show him, if possible, some of the places where the Muslims have been murdered, particularly women and children, or where their bodies have been thrown down into the wells and so on. I think he should see for himself some visible atrocities which have been committed on women if such evidences are at present available in the hospitals or in your refugee camps.

Yours sincerely,
Shaheed Suhrawardy
(H.S. Suhrawardy)
[Chief Minister of Bengal]

Jafar Imam, Esqr.
Patna.

8. Exodus of Refugees from Bihar

Question in the Legislative Assembly, 8 February 1947
Home Poll (I), File. No. 22/4/47, NAI.

QUESTION FOR THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

AHMED E.H. JAFFER: (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member please make a statement to this House on the question of Bihar exodus?

(b) What is the extent of this Exodus of the Muslims of Bihar into other Provinces?

(c) Is it a fact that the Bihar Government are placing every obstacle to the people of that province to move into other provinces for safety?

(d) What inducement has the Government of Bihar given to the Muslim population to remain in the Province?

(e) Will Government request the Bihar Government to give every assistance to those of the population who wish to leave the Province? If not, why not?

* * *

NOTES IN THE HOME DEPARTMENT

Please see the Legislative Assembly question in the PUC.

2. The Bihar Government in their fortnightly report for November 1946 have stated that intensive propaganda of many of the Muslim League volunteers discouraged refugees from returning to their villages and many have even left the Province and have gone to Bengal and other places. In their fortnightly report for the first half of December, 1946 the Bengal Government have stated that in Burdwan there are about 20,000 Bihar refugees and in Calcutta about 9,000 refugees. The Bengal Government themselves do not appear to be happy about the refugees from Bihar since they have said that the presence of Bihar refugees in Burdwan has been disturbing labour and increasing communal tension. It will also be seen that there are about 25,000 Bengal refugees in Assam. Whether these movements of refugees should be termed a mass exodus of refugees from Bihar to Bengal is a matter of opinion and we have no information as to the Bihar Government's placing any obstacles. In this connection attention is also invited to the United Press of India message below.

It does not seem necessary to address the Bihar Government for any materials. We may await the admission of the question. It admitted we may reply that the Government understand that a few thousands of refugees have gone from Bihar to Bengal and other places as some refugees from Bengal have also gone to Assam and other places. We may also say that as these movements of population are related to the maintenance of public order the matter is one for the Provincial Govts. to settle and that there is no occasion for the Central Govt to intervene.

G.V. Bedekar
3/1/47

Secy

I argue that the matter is not one of interprovincial migration which would be a central concern. I would hope that the question would be disallowed.

If it is admitted there would be nothing gained by reference to the Govt of Bihar since the material for a reply will be in the 'receiving' provinces.

The line of reply would I think be to say that the matter is of provincial concern and that neither the G of Bihar nor any other Govt has applied for the intervention of the G of I which is not prepared to intervene in these circumstances.

If any detailed reply is thought of it might be on these lines—

- (a) and (e) No Sir: the matter is not primarily the concern of the Central Govt.
- (b) [the figures upto date so far as reported—for example, from Bengal—could be given]
- (c) No—but incitements are reported to be offered to prevent Muslims returning to their villages.
- (d) Arrangements have been made to ensure the safety of returning villagers.

A.E. Porter
4/1/47

HM

HM is doubtful if we would be able to avoid the question on legal grounds. Information on (a) of this question may be obtained from the Provinces concerned including the Govt of Bihar

and a statement should be prepared on the basis of the information received. Clauses (b) and (c) may be referred to the Bihar Govt only.

V. Shankar
7/1/47 PS

Secy

* * *

Original

No. 673

Coorg Chief Commissioner's Office,
Mercara, the 17th January 1947

From: Diwan Bahadur K. Chengappa, CIE,
Chief Commissioner of Coorg.

To: The Deputy Secretary to the Government of India,
Home Department, New Delhi, 3.

Subject: Communal Disturbances—Refugees from Bihar.

Sir,

Please refer to your express letter No. 22/4/47-Poll (I), dated the 9th January 1947 on the subject mentioned above.

There are no refugees from Bihar in Coorg.

For Chief Commissioner

* * *

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM.

HOME DEPARTMENT. POLICE BRANCH.

No. HPL.6/47/6.

Dated Shillong, the 18th Jan. 1947

From

Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam,

To

The Secretary to the Government of India,

Home Department.

Subject: Communal Disturbances—Refugees from Bihar.

Reference: Mr G.V. Bedekar's letter No. 22/4/47-Poll (I), dated the 9th January, 1947.

Sir,

I am directed to say that so far as known to this Government, no refugees have migrated to this Province from Bihar.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient servant,
Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam.

* * *

EXPRESS LETTER

From: Baluchistan, Sibi

To: Home in, New Delhi.

No. 12-P15/47(I)

Dated Sibi, the 20 January 1947.

Subject: Communal Disturbances—Refugees from Bihar.

Your Express letter 22/4/47-Poll (I) January ninth aa No refugees from Bihar have migrated to Baluchistan.

for Agent to the Governor-General in Baluchistan

* * *

EXPRESS LETTER

From

A. Said, Esquire, MA, LLB (Cantab), Bar-at-Law,

Home Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Delhi.

To

The Secretary to the Government of India,

Home Department, New Delhi.

No. F. 16(3) 47-Home

Dated Delhi, the 23rd January 1947.

Kindly refer to Mr Bedekar's express letter No. 22/4/47-Poll (1), dated the 9th January 1947, asking for material for reply to a question in the Legislative Assembly for the forthcoming Budget session regarding migration of refugees from Bihar to the Delhi Province. No definite information is available in regard to the exact number of immigrants from Bihar after the recent disturbances in that Province, but an approximate estimate of refugees who have arrived in Delhi from Bihar is eighteen.

A.A. Said

Home Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Delhi

* * *

EXPRESS LETTER

No. A/26-2

From: The Chief Commission Ajmer-Merwara.

To: Home, New Delhi 3.

Dated Ajmer the 23 January 1947.

Communal Disturbance. Refugees from Bihar

Reference Home Department Express letter No. 22/4/47-Poll (I), dated the 9th January 1947.

2. So far as is known to this Administration there is only one refugee from Bihar in Ajmer-Merwara. He is Mohd Khalil son of Wazir of Patna and is staying in Mohalla Kumrah, near Shahjahni Dargah, Ajmer. He brought with him his wife, mother-in-law and son.

FOR CHIEF COMMISSIONER AJMER MERWARA

* * *

INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT

TO RE CUTTACK

HOMEIN NEW DELHI

REFCE: YOUR EXPRESS LETTER NUMBER 22/4/47-POLL (1), DATED
NINTH JANY 1947 AAA NO REFUGEES FROM BIHAR HAVE MIGRATED ORISSA = ORISSA

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INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT

TO

RE BOMBAY 24 STE PTY 75 IMMEDIATE HOMEIN

NEW DELHI

YOUR EXPRESS LETTER NO 22/4/47-POLL (1) OF 9TH INSTANT REPORTS SO FAR RECEIVED SHOW THAT ONLY ONE REFUGEE CAME TO THIS PROVINCE ON 1 ST INSTANT AND LEFT ON 18TH ALSO A MUSLIM EMPLOYEE OF RESERVE BANK AT MONGHIR WHO HAS NOT SUFFERED IN RIOTS HAS LEFT HIS JOB AND COME TO BOMBAY TO SEEK EMPLOYMENT HE IS BEING HELPED BY MUSLIM LEAGUE RELIEF COMMITTEE = BOMBAY SPECIAL

* * *

INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT

LUCKNOW 25 STE 34 HOMEIN NEW DELHI

REFCE HOMEIN EXPRESS LETTER NO 22/4/47-POLL (1) DATED JANY NINTH STOP SUMMARY ENQUIRY REVEALS NO REPEAT NO EVIDENCE OF REFUGEES FROM BIHAR MIGRATING INTO THIS PROVINCE

= UPAD =

* * *

IMMEDIATE

GOVERNMENT OF SIND.

No: L.A.40/A/I-H(S).

Home Department (Special),
Sind Secretariat,
Karachi, 22nd January 1947.

To,

The Deputy Secretary to the Government of India,
Home Department,
New Delhi.

Subject: Communal disturbances—Refugees from Bihar

Reference your Express Letter No: 22/4/47-Poll (1), dated the 9th January 1947, on the subject noted above.

2. I am to state that in this province refugees from Bihar have so far migrated only to the City of Karachi.

3. The Chairman Bihar Emigrants Reception Committee, Karachi, reports that 200 men, representing 200 families, are already in Karachi: their families are reaching Karachi in batches. In addition to this number, two thousand poor families are starting from Bihar for Karachi by special train very soon according to the....

* * *

INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT.

X RA NAGPUR 25 STE 27 HOMIN NEW DELHI

REFCE YOUR EXPRESS LETTER NO 22-4-47-POLL (1) OF NINTH JANY STOP NO REFUGEES FROM BIHAR
HAVE MIGRATED TO THIS PROVINCE: = CP =

* * *

INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT.

OOO ND CALCUTTA 27 STE PTY 104 IMMEDIATE HOMEIN NEW DELHI

REFERENCE YOUR EXPRESS LETTER 22/4/47-POLL (1), DATED JANUARY

NINTH STOP NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN CAMPS IS ABOUT SIXTYONE THOUSAND STOP THESE EXCLUDE
LARGE NUMBER LIVING IN BUSTEES IN CALCUTTA AND MILL AREAS IN SUBURBS STOP IN HOOGHLY MILL
AREA ABOVE NUMBER ESTIMATED TO BE ABOUT SEVEN THOUSAND = 50= STOP FIGURES OF THOSE

LIVING WITH FRIENDS AND RELATIVES NOT AVAILABLE BUT THEIR NUMBER BELIEVED TO BE ABOUT
FIFTY THOUSAND STOP REFERENCE YOUR EXPRESS LETTER 74 D/47 ROLL (1) DATED JANUARY NINTH STOP
THIS GOVERNMENT CONCERNED WITH ITEM (B) ONLY AND REPLY IS IN THE NEGATIVE = BENGAL

* * *

Express Letter

No. 83-BI.

Dated Peshawar, the 25th January, 1947.

17/6-BI

From: Norwef-Peshawar

To: Homein-New Delhi

SUBJECT: Communal disturbances—Refugee from Bihar.

Message:

Reference your Express letter No. 22/4/47-Poll (I), dated the 9.1.1947.

2. A Muslim Doctor and his relation arrived at Mardan, North West Frontier Province on the 24th December, 1946, as refugees from Bihar. They stayed in Mardan and Lundkhwar until 11th January 1947, and then returned to Bihar, as the doctor found that the local language and the absence of other facilities handicapped him in his work.

The only other refugee from Bihar, who has permanently settled in the North-West Frontier Province, is a young boy of about 4 years of age called Mohd Hassan. He is staying with Mohd Jan, a baker of Dera Ismail Khan.

Issue of the above has been authorized.

for Chief Secretary to Government
North-West Frontier Province.

* * *

INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT

TO X OE LAHORE

V 31 STE

33 HOMEIN NEW DELHI

YOUR EXPRESS LETTER 22/4/47-POLL (1), DATED NINTH JANUARY

STOP NUMBER OF BIHAR REFUGEES MIGRATED TO THIS PROVINCE THREE TWO FIVE 325 =

HOMESec

* * *

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Home Department.

Express Letter Routine No. 279

From

Madras home, Madras.

To

Homein, New Delhi

Migration—From Bihar to Madras—Number of immigrants.

Ref: Your express letter No. 22/4/47-Poll (1), dated 9-1-1947

Only one refugee from Bihar is reported to have migrated to the Madras Province.

for Secretary to Government

9. 'Need of Relief and Rehabilitation'

Extracts from a Report from *The Tribune*, 9 February 1947.

NAWASHAHR (HAZARA). 8 Feb.—R.B. Lala Isher Das, President Hazara Hindu-Sikh Relief Committee writes:

...Thousands of refugees have taken shelter in Muzaffarabad (Kashmir State) Rawalpindi and Hassan Abdal (Punjab) and in the district itself there is an official relief camp at Kakul and a large number of refugees are now living in Abbottabad and Haripur also where there are non-official camps aided by the State.

Relief and Rehabilitation

The question of relief and rehabilitation has, therefore, assumed enormous proportions and it cannot be tackled successfully by the residents of Hazara alone. Its magnitude can be judged from the fact that some 12,000 Hindus and Sikhs have either lost their homes or have left them in panic and are now living in uncomfortable conditions in the places mentioned above. The Government will have to think in terms of lakhs rather than thousands, where so much loss of property, life and dispossession on such a large scale have occurred, and this aspect of the case is receiving their urgent consideration.

I do not know exactly how many houses and shops have been burnt, how many cattle—milch and draught—have been destroyed and how much other property has been irretrievably lost. The total loss must, however, run into lakhs and though, it is hoped that with the return of confidence most of the Hindu and Sikh town-dwellers would go back to their homes and

resume their normal life in the course of a few weeks, the Sikhs and a few Hindu villagers of the Abbottabad tehsil cannot go back to their villages for several weeks—possibly months—for the simple reason that they have no houses left where to take shelter in the wintry climate of a sub-Himalayan range. The prolonged absence of these persons from their fields will naturally adversely affect agricultural operations and, therefore, even when they go back to their villages and start building houses, they will still need a good deal of relief.

Appeals for Funds

The Government should appoint a committee of officials and non-officials to go into the question of rehabilitation at the earliest moment. The need for relief on a large scale by private agency still exists. I, therefore, appeal most earnestly on behalf of the Hazara Hindu-Sikh Relief Committee for funds to enable it to carry on its work till such time as is no longer required. I can give an assurance that the money received will be utilized in the best possible manner for the purpose for which it is donated....

10. Disbursal of Money for Bengal and Bihar Relief

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Col N.S. Gill, 15 February 1947
SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 228-9.

New Delhi
 15 February 1947

My dear Colonel Gill,

I have received your letter of the 12th instant. It was delivered to me yesterday by your man. I have seen Gandhiji's letter enclosed by you along with the letter. It does not authorize me to give you any more money. I told you that I had instructions from him not to give any money without his sanction.

I had replied to both of your letters referred to in your letter of the 12th instant and posted them at the address mentioned therein. In both these letters I had made it clear that I would give any amount that may be sanctioned by Gandhiji. In this matter I can give nothing without his approval, and therefore you have only to obtain his approval if you want me to give you any money. I do not like to say 'no' in this small matter, but you will understand that it is not a question of money, but a question of principle and discipline. I cannot go against his instructions. It would create difficulties for me as well as for you. If he wanted that I should give you any more money, he would have given you a letter of instructions to Birlaji at Calcutta as he did previously.

I very much regret that I cannot accept your suggestion that Bihar work can be taken up independently by me or you. He is sure to enquire about it, or at least know about it, and he would take you to task if he found out afterwards that you had gone against his instructions.

Yours sincerely,
 Vallabhbhai Patel

Colonel Niranjan Singh Gill
 Patna



11. Nehru Consoles Refugees

Jawaharlal Nehru's Speech at a Refugee Camp in Lahore, 15 March 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, p. 299.

I have heard of your woeful tale and am conscious that you have suffered a lot. But four things are essential. First, people should not get panicky; secondly, those still in danger should be protected; thirdly, those who have been evacuated from the danger zones should be properly looked after; and, fourthly, further trouble must be stopped and stopped speedily.

I am confident that the military authorities will be able to bring the situation rapidly under control. The Government are determined to do everything possible to meet the situation. The people should face all difficulties with courage. I have always loved the people of the Punjab and admired them as a brave people. I feel sure that the Punjab and the whole of India will progress as they are already on the threshold of freedom. The present difficulties are in the nature of a test which, I have no doubt, will be successfully met.

12. Gandhi's Advice on Resettlement and Rehabilitation

Record of M.K. Gandhi's Discussion with Relief Committee Members in Bihar,
 15 March 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 84-6.

QUESTION: Will you advise Muslims to return to their villages in the prevailing disturbed conditions?

ANSWER: If you have the courage and if you have the requisite faith in God, I shall advise you to return to your villages. I do realize that it is a difficult task. If I had undergone such harrowing experience, perhaps I myself would not have been able to go back; it would have made me a raving lunatic. The memory of murdered men and women would have haunted me. But I aspire to reach a stage when I shall have such abiding faith in God that I would go and stay in the midst of people who had become my enemies.

Q. If there is no change of heart in the majority community, what should the suffering minority do? Should they live in small pockets or leave the province for ever?

A. If you do not return and since it was the fault of the Hindus, the Government is bound to compensate you for the loss of your property. But I do not understand your demand that the Government should allot land somewhere else. Well, if you can arrange mutual exchanges, no one can prevent you. But if the Government arranges this, it will not lead to a purification of hearts. Many people are talking of pockets. I simply do not understand this. If those villages where the Muslims are in majority welcome you, who can prevent you from going there? Similarly, no one can prevent you from leaving the province if you decide to go in spite of my promises of affection. There is a law in the USA that anyone wanting to migrate from that country has to obtain Government's permission. I do not approve of such a law.

Q. Should or should not those who have committed murder, rape, arson and other heinous crimes receive appropriate punishment? If you think they should, how will you advise the Government of Bihar?

A. Of course, those responsible for devilish deeds must be punished. The Government of Bihar has not abjured the principle of punishment. There is no such government anywhere in the world today. When such a government comes into being, I shall listen to their argument. But

a government which believes in the theory of crime and punishment but does not punish the criminal has no right to call itself a government.

Q. Should the Government of Bihar make adequate provision for the relief of orphans and widows who have no one to support them? If some organization has undertaken such work, what will you advise the Bihar Government on this?

A. They are the responsibility of the State. If some organization wants to render relief in its own manner, it will not be justified in expecting assistance from the Government. This work has to be done either by the Government itself or in a manner approved by the Government.

Q. How will it be possible to make good the historical, cultural, social and religious damage done by the madness of the majority?

A. This has been a cruel and terrible tragedy. Such holocausts have shaken the world earlier and will do so even in the future. Only when we are reformed and tolerant enough to realize that all religions lead to the same God called by various people by various names, will the world change for the better. Till then the earth shall not be a habitable place. Till that change comes about, it is impossible to prevent such barbarity and the irreparable losses resultant from it.

Q. What should be done with those officers who openly helped the rioters and deliberately helped one side against the other?

A. Those officers against whom such charges can be proved can have no place in the government.

Q. What do you propose to do to prevent the repetition of riots at places where the Muslims have suffered? Even now the houses and properties of Muslims are being damaged.

A. I am doing my best to prevent a repetition. I shall continue to stay here till I succeed in my effort. I have already declared that I shall do or die. God will either grant me success or put an end to my life. I believe that a change of heart is essential if I am to succeed. As I have been telling the Hindus in Noakhali, this is not a work where the army or police can be of much help. You must gather courage and fear no one except God. I shall advise the Ministers to frame a law making Hindus responsible for the safety of the Muslim minority. Such laws will not in fact be needed where hearts have been purified.

Q. Can the cruelties and injustices meted out to us detain you for long in Bihar? Your prolonged presence is needed for the help of the refugees.

A. You need not worry on that account. I shall not leave Bihar so long as Hindus and Muslims do not jointly allow me to do so on the basis of their brotherly feelings.

Q. Will you call them Congressmen who organized and led the recent riots? If not, what action will be taken against them to preserve the prestige of the Congress?

A. How can those who participated in riots be called Congressmen? Before condemning them, I must listen to their version of the story. I am a devotee of truth and shall lay down my life in serving truth.

13. 'Suffering Punjab Calls for Help—An Appeal for One Crore'

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 16 March 1947.

LAHORE, 15 March—A terrible catastrophe has befallen the unhappy land of five rivers. An unprecedented storm of communal hatred is raging all over the province and forces of violence

unparalleled in the history of the Punjab have been unleashed. We are still too thick in the midst of a ghastly tragedy, and things undreamt of before are happening at a terrific speed.

It is yet too early to assess the magnitude of the calamity. But little bits of news as they are percolating through the rigidity of press censorship tell a frightfully bad tale. Human life has lost its sanctity and the number of killed and wounded has already run into thousands. The loss of property, movable and immovable has been tremendous, harrowing accounts of thousands of non-Muslim refugees from villages in Rawalpindi and Attock districts seeking shelter in Rawalpindi and other towns have already appeared in the press. They have been rendered homeless and destitute and it would not be easy for them to make a fresh start in life. The plight of widows and orphans in these areas can be well imagined.

The situation as it is unfolding itself calls for very prompt measures. Survivors of persons killed have to be supported medically and general aid has to be rendered to the wounded, legal aid and defence arrangements have to be made for people who may be in need of the same and extensive schemes of rehabilitating thousands thrown on the streets have...worked out. Money is urgently needed for doing all this and much more.

While the Government will take its time in reacting to the situation things cannot and should not be allowed to drift. We, therefore, deem it our duty to appeal to the generosity of our countrymen to enable us to give the much-needed relief to the suffering humanity.

Though our needs are colossal, we have fixed our minimum target at rupees one crore. While the Punjab, though its economic life has been rudely shaken, will do its utmost to help its people, we hope our fellow countrymen in other provinces will not fail us at this critical juncture. We have constituted a representative committee for organizing relief work and we are taking steps that it is properly centralised and co-ordinated. An earnest effort will, therefore, be made to spend every pie in most useful and effective manner.

All contributions earmarked or general will be gratefully received and thankfully acknowledged and may be sent to the Secretary, Punjab Riot Sufferers Relief Committee, Lajpatrai Bhawan, Lahore or to the current account of the committee with its bankers, the Punjab National Bank Ltd., Lahore, and the Central Bank of India and their branches. Contributions can also be sent to the branches of the Bharat Bank, Prabhat Bank, National Bank of India, National City Bank, the First National Bank and the Punjab Kashmir Bank, who have been requested to receive collections on behalf of this committee.

Swaran Singh, Ex-Minister, Coalition Government, President, Bhim Sen Sachar, Ex-Minister, Coalition Government, Secretary....

14. 'Pakistan Should Become Really Pak'

M.K. Gandhi's Advice to Muslim Refugees at Patna, 16 March 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 96-7.

You have my sympathy in your misery. What has happened should never have happened. But I believe that everything is futile unless there is a change of heart. I would suggest that you should go to Noakhali. Go there and find out for yourself if the Hindus have not been oppressed. If you are convinced about it, engage yourselves in relief work and service in that place. Impress upon the minority that they are your brethren, that they cannot leave the country, and that they may do so only over your dead bodies. Tell even the oppressors—let me say they are the members of the [Muslim] League—that such tyranny would neither bring any benefit to

their party nor would it protect it in any way. And if the tyrants still continue to oppress, you must lay down your lives to protect your brethren. You must courageously tell them that they should first strike you before striking the innocent. Even if there is one such person among you, your fame would be matchless in all the world and God would shower flowers over you, and that fragrance would spread in the entire country. I am merely showing you your duty, since you have come to seek my advice. I would be the happiest man to see you rising high and to see Pakistan becoming really *pak*. And, if you do this people would come to you to learn the lessons of non-violence and love.

15. 'HELP PUNJAB—Thousands Need Bread and Shelter—Sardar Patel'

The Tribune, 18 March 1947

NEW DELHI, 17 March.—Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel has issued the following appeal for relief to Punjab victims:

'The Punjab has witnessed within the last two weeks communal orgy on a very extensive scale. Unprecedented devastation, involving large-scale arson, murder, loot and wanton destruction of life and property over a widely scattered area, has been perpetrated.

...tragic sufferings of a very large number of innocent and helpless victims of this bestiality demand immediate action for relief and succour. Thousands have lost their dear ones, most of whom were probably the bread-winners, a very vast majority of them have lost their most valued possessions and almost all have been deprived of the shelter of their roof and the refuge of their homes.'

'All this makes an irresistible call on the humanitarian and brotherly instincts of all of us. The task of relief and rehabilitation is of a magnitude the dimensions of which cannot at present be computed with precision, and help, if it is to be utilized to the best advantage, must be both timely and adequate. I know many are willing and even anxious to contribute their utmost to the relief of refugees and victims whose number runs into thousands. In order to afford them a medium through which help can reach those who so amply deserve it and urgently need it, I have decided, in my capacity as treasurer of the Indian National Congress, to open a fund to be known as "the Punjab Relief Fund." I appeal to all my countrymen to respond whole-heartedly to this call of humanity and to send their donations to the above fund at Aurangzeb Road, New Delhi, with the least possible delay. Every contribution will be gratefully acknowledged.'—API

16. Gandhi Assures Muslims of Safety and Resettlement

M.K. Gandhi's Talk with Muslim Refugees at Masaurhi, 18 March 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 111–14.

REFUGEES: Please give us an assurance that our lives, property and honour will be protected.
GANDHIJI: Efforts are being made in this direction. I shall advise the Government to hold all the Hindus in a village responsible for any harm to its Muslim minority and to punish them strictly according to law.

R. Securities should be taken from gangsters and influential people in the locality so that they may not foment riots again.

G. Those persons who had led the riots should be held responsible for law and order in the locality to prevent recurrence of riots. As it is not right to hold everyone responsible for the riots, it would not be right to punish everyone for the riots; nor would it be easy to do so. But if you can recognize and prove anyone's participation in the riots, the law will certainly punish him.

R. We should be issued licenses to possess arms for self-protection.

G. It is strange that I am hearing the same arguments here which I used to hear in Noakhali. I shall certainly oppose this. I can never understand why some or all of you should be given arms. This is not the way of creating an atmosphere of friendship. I had told the Hindus in Noakhali that they could not live there nor could the local Government protect them if the entire Muslim population was hostile to them. Should the Government kill 80 per cent of the population to protect them? No Government can do this today. I would like to tell you that my ways are different. I believe that a man should become brave but bravery consists not in killing but in getting killed and that too without hatred for the killer. Muslims were no cowards, but they are terrified today and that too on account of us—this makes me hang my head in shame. If my staying here has any meaning, you should shed your anxiety. I shall not go away till you yourself ask me to go, and assure me that Hindus and Muslims are living like brothers again.

R. There should be some arrangement so that all Muslims can live together.

G. This talk of 'pockets' is not new to me. As soon as I arrived in Bihar, I went to see the leader of the Muslim League, Barrister Abdul Aziz of Patna. He explained to me everything. Earlier I used to oppose the idea of 'pockets'; but now I understand the logic behind the demand. I can very well understand that one just cannot stay at a place where one's relations and friends have been massacred. Hence if people want to shift to villages where there is a large number of Muslims, they can migrate there with mutual consent.

I have advised the Government to build houses for displaced persons or give them funds for the purpose if they so choose. If you demand, however, that the Government should provide you everything, it may not be in a position to do so because it would mean acquisition of some people's lands. And this would lead to all sorts of complications. If there is any vacant piece of land and you can settle there, you may certainly do so. A big landlord from North Bihar was ready to take as many Muslims as would like to stay on his lands. If you agree I shall write to him.

R. We should receive compensation for whatever we have lost.

G. Even the Government would go bankrupt if it agreed to this. Some people claim they have lost lakhs, some others claim they have lost crores. How can we evaluate the actual loss? I think the Government would not be in a position to pay even one-fourth of the claims. It can only provide shelter or give money to enable people to stand on their own feet. In Noakhali, many weavers and fishermen had practically nothing to support themselves. There I had suggested that the local Government should advance them loans which could be repaid in easy instalments. Money alone has no value. You are all farmers, a hard-working lot. If you take courage in both hands, you will forget in no time what you have undergone. Moreover a commission is being set up. Its object is not only to record whatever has happened, but also to examine the steps that are being taken and to recommend measures for the future.

R. 50 per cent of us should be taken in the police force.

G. I am totally opposed to such demands. I told Hindus in Noakhali: 'I will not put in a word for a Hindu police officer. Does it make any sense that an officer is removed just because he is a Muslim? Of course, he should certainly be removed if he is inefficient. And after all, the officers are going to carry out only what the Chief Minister of Bengal, Shaheed Suhrawardy Saheb, wants them to do. If Shaheed Saheb is good, the officers will be good; but if he himself is bad, how can they remain good?'

R. The Government or the Congress should pay us compensation or loans in proportion to the size of our business.

G. The Government should only advance loans and not pay compensation.

R. Stolen goods are being recovered. This work should be done swiftly and firmly. Aid should be given to those who want to buy looms and yarn. They should be given free rations as long as they do not earn enough for their sustenance.

G. All efforts must certainly be made to recover looted property. To those whose tools and properties have been totally destroyed Government must provide shelter and food till they can stand on their own feet. But if someone argues that the Government should go on providing everything free, then that will not be feasible. It will mean the Government should provide everything free to an ex-millionaire until he starts earning his millions. This is a ridiculous proposition.

R. Adequate arrangements should be made for recovering abducted girls.

G. Certainly. Please give the names and addresses of such girls to me. I shall immediately try to trace them. Hindus have been writing to me to let them know even if there is one such girl; and they will move heaven and earth to recover her.

R. We should have complete freedom to practise our religious rites, as we used to enjoy before the riots.

G. Certainly, it should be so.

R. The Government should make early and adequate arrangements to repair or rebuild before the rainy season such houses as were damaged during the riots.

G. Certainly, this work should be finished early.

The following decisions taken at the meeting of the refugees were placed before Gandhiji for his comments:

1. The relief camps should be situated near police stations instead of inside the towns. Gandhiji should be requested to depute two special workers for each camp.

G. I agree.

2. We shall, besides Government help, raise volunteers with the co-operation of Hindus for our protection, clearing of our houses and so on.

G. Right.

3. Panchayats will be formed which will perform such functions as scotching false rumours, settling internal disputes, returning mortgages and striving to recover stolen goods and so on.

G. Formation of panchayats is welcome. If people co-operate among themselves, I shall help them in every possible way.

4. The loans for relief should be advanced in a spirit of mutual help.

G. Right.

5. Women volunteers should also be recruited from among the Muslims as well as Hindus and they should, in addition to other work, strive to recover abducted women.

G. Right.

6. After constructing the houses, essential things like utensils, cots, small tables, and other things, should also be provided.

G. Right.

7. Licences for arms should be issued on the recommendations of the panchayat. They should not be issued to persons who do not need them or who want them for sport.

G. That's right.

17. Relief Measures for Refugees in Punjab

Note by Evan Jenkins of His Interview with Gokul Chand Narang, 22 March 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 251-2.

Dr Gokul Chand Narang came to see me this afternoon with reference to his letter of yesterday, 21st March. Our conversation dealt with the following points:

...2. Special measures should be taken to evacuate refugees in the Jhelum district. I explained what we were doing and said that two special trains had been sent to Chakwal yesterday and had returned empty.

3. Medical arrangements and equipment will be needed for the refugee camps. Here again I explained what we were doing. I said we were sending up five doctors, that blankets were being arranged, and that we would take over medical equipment from the Army. Dr Gokul Chand suggested sending a large number of Boy Scouts and other workers, but I rode him off this. I said we were in need of plates, and other things, and he replied to this that we could use leaf plates, which would do very well.

4. Special efforts should be made to trace abducted women and to prevent their being taken out of the Punjab, especially into NWFP. I said all this was in hand. Dr Gokul Chand then said that he had been told by people from Jhang that the Pir of Makhad was now very hostile. I said the Pir's influence was rather less than he made out, and that I never believed much that was said for or against him without verification. The feuds between him and the Khan of Makhad are notorious....

11. There are still several non-Muslim families staying in village Bachial, Tahsil and Police Station Gujar Khan. They have been forcibly converted, and it is to be assumed that they would like to get away. Dr Gokul Chand left with me a chit about this village signed by a Professor of the Dyal Singh College, who has relations there (attached)....

[E.M.J.]



18. Rehabilitation of Bihar Muslims

Letter from Yusuf A. Haroon to M.A. Jinnah, 22 March 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 353–7.

NAPIER ROAD, KARACHI,
 22 March 1947

My dear Quaid-i-Azam,

The question of Bihar Muslims has become a problem. The Muslims of Sind are anxious to receive as permanent settlers as many Muslims as possible. We would, of course, prefer people who are cultivators and who can plough. The Provincial Muslim League has received offers from various leading *zamindars* of this province showing their willingness to receive as many cultivators as we can send them, but the emigrants from Bihar who are pouring into this province are mostly middle-class people looking for service employment; only a very small number of them are in search of trade.

The Government of Sind is planning for their accommodation and giving them land at a nominal value near Karachi. The speed with which the Government is planning to open up this new colony, with hospitals, schools, and a police post, is really to be congratulated [*sic*], and I hope that demarcation of this land will be over by the end of the next month.

The only unfortunate controversy which arose between Khan Bahadur Khuhro and Sir Ghulam Hussain [Hidayatullah] was with regard to agricultural land near Karachi in which K.B. Khuhro had said that about 60,000 acres of land would be available for Biharis between 1948 and 1949 and would be given to them for cultivation. Sir Ghulam Hussain then issued a press communiqué, stating that the land will not be available till 1952. Of course, this has discouraged the immigrants, and I am receiving letters from all kinds of people.

I had a discussion with K.B. Khuhro, and he told me that he is preparing statistics which will be placed before the Governor for his final approval for land which will be available for cultivation in 1948–49; and now again a communiqué has been issued by K.B. Khuhro's department, a cutting [of which] I enclose for your information.

I understand from a reliable source that there is a movement afoot in Bihar with regard to Muslim emigrants endeavouring to discourage them from leaving the province. Mr Yunus has written a letter to Sir Ghulam Hussain, a copy of which he has sent to Mr Khuhro, which I enclose for your information. I feel that Mr Yunus does not sympathize with emigrant movement. I feel that this policy will do no good to the Muslims there, while a little emigration from that part will be of great help to Sind in building up our population figures and providing the labour to the Province so desperately requiring [*sic*] in its industrial and commercial advancement.

What I wish is this that the Muslims in Bihar should be encouraged to leave [Bihar] and settle in Sind. If you happen to see Mr Yunus or the Bihar leaders personally, you may kindly impress upon them the necessity of Muslims coming to settle in this part of the country.

Yours sincerely,
 Y.A. HAROON

[Enclosures 1 and 2 omitted]

Enclosure 3

M. Yunus to Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah

PATNA,
7 March 1947

My dear Hidayatullah Sahib,

Regarding the conversation I had with you this morning, I was rather surprised to learn that someone has given you the impression that we are sending out people with hopes that they will get fifty thousand acres of land in Sind. I believe this impression is created due to the fact that some people of standing issued some statements giving out such hopes to the people of Bihar. I can quite appreciate that the poor Bihar sufferers have been very much misled in this connection. The fact, however, remains that they are now in Sind, and the problem which faces us is as to whether due to their own fault or through the fault of someone else, they are there now and what is to be done for them. I do hope you will look at the whole question in this light and help them as far as you can in settling them wherever possible. I must express my sincerest gratitude to you and to all the Ministers for all that you all have been doing and are prepared to do, and I quite realize and appreciate the difficulties that naturally stand in the way of large numbers of refugees getting into the place all at once.

The difficulty with the minority provinces has been that these people claim that they have a right to expect from the Pakistan areas such help which is their due, owing to the fact that they have staked all and sacrificed themselves for the establishment of Pakistan. In fact the Biharis have suffered most and we hope that their suffering and their blood will help in establishing Pakistan in the majority provinces. However, I am trying to impress upon the people the difficulty which is naturally in your way.

A very small population has gone to Sind; they find it easier to walk across the border into Bengal. We are very grateful to the Muslim League Ministry of Bengal who have spent several lacs on them in maintaining nearly three lacs of people at their own cost for at least three months. I have visited most of the camps in Calcutta and I found the arrangements for both their board and lodging entirely at Government cost very satisfactory. I am proceeding by car on the 9th with a view to visit[ing] a large number of areas in different parts of Bengal to see our refugees there. The Government of Bengal, just like the Government of Sind, but, of course, on a very much larger scale, have prepared a scheme for the rehabilitation of these Muslim sufferers. The position of Bengal, of course, offers a smaller difficulty because of its proximity to Bihar....

I tried to get several other Ministers on the phone but was told that they were out of the station. I could only get you and the Honourable Mr Pir Ilahi Bakhsh. I am, therefore, forwarding copies of this letter to all of them, so that they may, in consultation with you, help us and give you all information regarding the subjects of their respective portfolios with which they may be dealing.

I hope you are keeping well. With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
M. YUNUS

The Honourable Mr Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah,
Prime Minister, Sind,
Karachi

20. Gandhi Reassures Muslim Refugees

M.K. Gandhi's Talk with Women Refugees at Pipalwan, 22 March 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 139–40.

I am sad as well as glad to meet you all. There are many sisters here whose husbands, sons and relations have been killed. Their tragic tales make me sad. I was very glad to hear that the SDO acted very promptly and prudently to prevent riots here, and that refugees from other places were given shelter here. Hindus from this place have written to me saying that they did not participate at all in the riots.

I have seen with my own eyes how much people have suffered because of the riots. I have seen houses which were burnt or looted, and I was told that the residents had been killed. The aggrieved people, the people whose houses have been destroyed, wish to resettle at some other place. Personally, I do not approve of this. Why should we lose heart? We should keep up courage. The Hindus have committed a sin. What have they gained thereby? You do not trust them. But if their hearts are cleansed, if they clean your houses, if they build new houses for you and if they sincerely atone for their sins, why should you then not return to your homes? True bravery on the part of Hindus consists in confessing their guilt and changing their hearts. I shall be only too glad if they do this.

People should return to the houses where there had been no killing. If the residents don't feel like going to murder-haunted houses they may shift to another place. It would be good if lands can be exchanged by mutual consent. It may not be possible for the Government to arrange such transfers. In any case whether they return to their own villages or shift to some other place, Muslim brothers and sisters should eschew all anger and bear no ill will towards Hindus. You should not think of taking revenge against those who have oppressed you. That is true bravery.

How transitory is this life? Everyone has to die one day. It is difficult to comprehend the ways of God. Is there any place where He is not present? Some people hold God responsible for whatever has happened. Who can understand His ways? God cannot be talked about disparagingly. Why should we, then, blame Him for these happenings? I do not wish to hear such talk from the lips of those who recite the *kalma*. In fact, no one should even speak in this vein.

I wish to reassure all of you that I am wandering from place to place to prevent a repetition of what has happened so that Hindus and Muslims may live like brothers. I shall stay and strive here as long as hearts are not cleansed and fraternal feelings are not revived. I shall do or die; I shall either succeed in my mission or perish in the effort.

Section II

23 MARCH 1947

TO

2 JUNE 1947

Chapter 13. Constituent Assembly

1. Rights of Minorities and Scheduled Castes

Extracts from the Memorandum and Draft Articles Submitted by B.R. Ambedkar to the Sub-committee on Fundamental Rights, 24 March 1947

B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), *Framing of India's Constitution*, Vol. II, pp. 84–114.

...ARTICLE II—SECTION III

Provisions for the protection of minorities

The Constitution of the United States of India shall provide:

Clause I

(1) That the Executive—Union or State—shall be non-Parliamentary in the sense that it shall not be removable before the term of the Legislature.

(2) Members of the Executive if they are not members of the Legislature shall have the right to sit in the Legislature, speak, vote and answer questions.

(3) The Prime Minister shall be elected by the whole House by single transferable vote.

(4) The representatives of the different minorities in the Cabinet shall be elected by members of each minority community in the Legislature by single transferable vote.

(5) The representatives of the majority community in the Executive shall be elected by the whole House by single transferable vote.

(6) A member of the Cabinet may resign his post on a censure motion or otherwise but shall not be liable to be removed except on impeachment by the House on the ground of corruption or treason.

Clause 2

(1) That there shall be appointed an Officer to be called the Superintendent of Minority Affairs.

(2) His status shall be similar to that of the Auditor-General appointed under section 166 of the Government of India Act of 1935 and removable in like manner and on the like grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court.

(3) It shall be the duty of the Superintendent to prepare an annual report on the treatment of minorities by the public, as well as by the Governments, Union and State, and of any transgressions of safeguards or any miscarriage of justice due to communal bias by Governments or their officers.

(4) The annual report of the Superintendent shall be placed on the Table of the Legislatures, Union and State, and the Governments, Union and State, shall be bound to provide time for the discussion of the report.

Clause 3

(1) The social boycott, promoting or instigating a social boycott or threatening a social boycott as defined below shall be declared to be an offence.

(i) *Boycott defined*—A person shall be deemed to boycott another who—

- (a) refuses to let or use or occupy any house or land, or to deal with, work for hire, or do business with another person, or to render to him or receive from him any service, or refuses to do any of the said things on the terms on which such things should commonly be done in the ordinary course of business, or
- (b) abstains from such social, professional or business relations as he would, having regard to such existing customs in the community which are not inconsistent with any fundamental right or other rights of citizenship declared in the Constitution, ordinarily maintain with such person, or
- (c) in any way injures, annoys or interferes with such other person in the exercise of his lawful rights.

(ii) *Offence of boycotting*—Whoever, in consequence of any person having done any act which he was legally entitled to do or of his having omitted to do any act which he was legally entitled to omit to do, or with intent to cause any person to do any act which he is not legally bound to do or to omit to do any act which he is legally entitled to do, or with intent to cause harm to such person in body, mind, reputation or property, or in his business or means of living, boycotts such person or any person in whom such person is interested, shall be guilty of the offence of boycotting:

Provided that no offence shall be deemed to have been committed under this section, if the court is satisfied that the accused person has not acted at the instigation of or in collusion with any other person or in pursuance of any conspiracy or of any agreement or combination to boycott.

(iii) *Offence of instigating or promoting a boycott*—Whoever—

- (a) publicly makes or publishes or circulates a proposal for, or
- (b) makes, publishes or circulates any statement, rumour or report with intent to, or which he has reason to believe to be likely to cause, or
- (c) in any other way instigates or promotes the boycotting of any person or class of persons, shall be guilty of the offence of instigating or promoting a boycott.

Explanation—An offence under this clause shall be deemed to have been committed although the person affected or likely to be affected by any action of the nature referred to herein is not designated by name or class but only by his acting or abstaining from acting in some specified manner.

(iv) *Offence of threatening a boycott*—Whoever, in consequence of any person having done any act which he was legally entitled to do or of his having omitted to do any act which he was legally entitled to omit to do, or with intent to cause any person to do any act which he is not legally bound to do or to omit to do any act which he is legally entitled to do, threatens to cause such person or any person in whom such person is interested, to be boycotted shall be guilty of the offence of threatening a boycott.

Exception—It is not boycott—

- (i) to do any act in furtherance of a *bona fide* labour dispute;
- (ii) to do any act in the ordinary course of business competition.

(2) All these offences shall be deemed to be cognizable offences. The Union Legislature shall make laws prescribing punishment for these offences.

Clause 4

That the power of the Central and Provincial Governments to make grants for any purpose, notwithstanding that the purpose is not one for which the Union or State Legislature as the case may be may make laws, shall not be abridged or taken away.

ARTICLE II—SECTION IV

Safeguards for the Scheduled Castes

Part I. Guarantees

The Constitution of the United States of India shall guarantee to the Scheduled Castes the following rights:

Clause 1

Right to Representation in the Legislature

(1) *Quantum of Representation*—(a) (i) The Scheduled Castes shall have minimum representation in the Legislature—Union and State—and if there be a group Constitution then in the group Legislature equal to the ratio of their population to the total population, provided that no other minority is allowed to claim more representation than what is due to it on the basis of its population.

- (ii) The Scheduled Castes of Sind and the NWF Province shall be given their due share of representation.
- (iii) Weightage where it becomes necessary to reduce a huge communal majority to reasonable dimensions shall come out of the share of the majority. In no case shall it be at the cost of another minority community.
- (iv) Weightage carved out from the share of majority shall not be assigned to one community only. But the same shall be divided among all minority communities equally or in inverse proportion to their
 - (1) economic position
 - (2) social status, and
 - (3) educational advance.

(b) There should be no representation to special interests. But if the same is allowed it must be taken out of the share of representation given to that community to which the special interest belongs.

(2) *Method of Election*—

(A) For Legislative Bodies

- (a) The system of election introduced by the Poona Pact shall be abolished.
- (b) In its place, the system of *Separate Electorates* shall be substituted.
- (c) Franchise shall be adult franchise
- (d) The system of voting shall be cumulative.

(B) For Local Bodies

The principles for determining the quantum of representation and the method of election for municipalities and local boards shall be the same as that adopted for the Union and State Legislatures.¹...

... Part II Special Responsibilities

That the United States of India shall undertake the following special responsibilities for the betterment of the Scheduled Castes:

Clause 1

(1) Governments—Union and State—shall be required to assume financial responsibility for the higher education of the Scheduled Castes and shall be required to make adequate provisions in their budgets. Such provisions shall form the first charge on the Education Budget of the Union and State Governments.

(2) The responsibility for finding money for secondary and college education of the Scheduled Castes in India shall be upon the State Governments and the different States shall make a provision in their annual budgets for the said purpose in proportion to the population of the Scheduled Castes to the total budget of the States.

(3) The responsibility for finding money for foreign education of the Scheduled Castes shall be the responsibility of the Union Government and the Union Government shall make a provision of rupees ten lakhs per year in its annual budget on that behalf.

(4) These special grants shall be without prejudice to the right of the Scheduled Castes to share in the expenditure incurred by the State Government for the advancement of primary education for the people of the State.

Clause 2

1. The following provision shall be made in the constitution of the Union Government:

- (i) There shall be a Settlement Commission under the new Constitution to hold uncultivated lands belonging to the State in trust for settlement of the Scheduled Castes in separate villages.
- (ii) The Union Government shall set apart annually a fund of Rs 5 crores for the purpose of promoting the scheme of settlement.
- (iii) That the commission shall have the power to purchase any land offered for sale and use it for the said purpose.

2. The Union Government shall from time to time pass such legislation as may be necessary for the commission to carry out its functions.

Part III Sanction for Safeguards and Amendment of Safeguards

Clause 1

The Constitution of the United States of India shall provide that—

The United States of India undertakes to give the safeguards contained in Article II, Section IV a place in the Constitution and make them a part of the Constitutional Law of India.

Clause 2

The provisions for the Scheduled Castes shall not be altered, amended or abrogated except in the following manner:

Any amendment or abrogation of Section IV of Article II or any part thereof relating to the Scheduled Castes shall only be made by a resolution passed in the manner prescribed below by the more popular chamber of the Union Legislature.

- (i) Any proposal for amendment or abrogation shall be initiated in the form of a resolution in the more popular chamber of the Union Legislature.
- (ii) No such resolution shall be moved—
 - (a) unless 25 years have elapsed after the Constitution has come into operation and has been worked; and
 - (b) unless six months' notice has been given to the House by the mover of his intention to move such a resolution.
- (iii) On the passing of such a resolution, the Legislature shall be dissolved and a new election held.
- (iv) The original resolution in the form in which it was passed by the previous Legislature shall be moved afresh in the same House of the newly elected Union Legislature.
- (v) The resolution shall not be deemed to have been carried unless it is passed by a majority of two-thirds of the members of the House and also two-thirds of members of the Scheduled Castes who have been returned through separate electorates.

Part IV Protection of Scheduled Castes in the Indian States

The Constitution of the United States of India shall provide that the admission of the Indian States into the Union shall be subject to the following condition:

All provisions relating to the Scheduled Castes contained in Section IV of Article II of the Constitution of the United States of India shall be extended to the Scheduled Castes in the Indian States. Such a provision in the Constitution of an Indian State shall be a condition precedent for its admission into the Union.

Part V Interpretation

I.—For the purposes of Article II the Scheduled Castes, as defined in the Government of India Scheduled Caste Order, 1936, issued under the Government of India Act, 1935, shall be deemed to be a minority.

II.—For the purposes of Article II a caste which is a Scheduled Caste in one State shall be treated as Scheduled Caste in all States of the Union.

¹ Clause 2 and 3 of this section of the draft articles ensured representation for Scheduled Castes in the Executive and the Services along similar lines as in Clause 1.

APPENDIX I EXPLANATORY NOTES

...Article II—Section III

Clause 1

...The problem of the Untouchables is a formidable one for the Untouchables to face. The Untouchables are surrounded by a vast mass of Hindu population which is hostile to them and which is not ashamed of committing any inequity or atrocity against them. For a redress of these

wrongs which are matters of daily occurrence, the Untouchables have to call in the aid of the administration. What is the character and composition of this administration? To be brief, the administration in India is completely in the hands of the Hindus. It is their monopoly. From top to bottom it is controlled by them. There is no department which is not dominated by them. They dominate the police, the magistracy and the revenue services, indeed any and every branch of the administration. The next point to remember is that the Hindus in the administration have the same positive anti-social and inimical attitude to the Untouchables which the Hindus outside the administration have. Their one aim is to discriminate against the Untouchables and to deny and deprive them not only of the benefits of law, but also of the protection of the law against tyranny and oppression. The result is that the Untouchables are placed between the Hindu population and the Hindu-ridden administration, the one committing wrongs against them and the other protecting the wrong-doer, instead of helping the victims.

Against this background, what can *Swaraj* mean to the Untouchables? It can only mean one thing, namely, that while today it is only the administration that is in the hands of the Hindus, under *Swaraj* the Legislature and Executive will also be in the hands of the Hindus. It goes without saying that such a *Swaraj* would aggravate the sufferings of the Untouchables. For, in addition to a hostile administration, there will be an indifferent Legislature and a callous Executive. The result will be that the administration unbridled in venom and in harshness, uncontrolled by the Legislature and the Executive, may pursue its policy of inequity towards the Untouchables without any curb. To put it differently, under *Swaraj* the Untouchables will have no way of escape from the destiny of degradation which Hindus and Hinduism have fixed for them.

These are special considerations against the introduction of the British system of executive which have their origin in the interests of the minorities and the Scheduled Castes. But there is one general consideration which can be urged against the introduction of the British Cabinet system in India. The British Cabinet system has undoubtedly given the British people a very stable system of government. Question is: will it produce a stable Government in India? The chances are very slender. In view of the clashes of castes and creeds there is bound to be a plethora of parties and groups in the Legislature in India. If this happens it is possible, nay certain, that under the system of Parliamentary executive like the one that prevails in England under which the Executive is bound to resign upon an adverse vote in the Legislature, India may suffer from instability of the Executive. For it is the easiest thing for groups to align and realign themselves at frequent intervals and for petty purposes and bring about the downfall of Government. The present solidarity of what are called the major parties cannot be expected to continue. Indeed as soon as the problem of the British in India is solved the cement that holds these parties together will fall away. Constant overthrow of Government is nothing short of anarchy. The present Constitution has in it section 93 which provides a remedy against it. But section 93 would be out of place in the Constitution of a free India. Some substitute must therefore be found for section 93.

Taking all these considerations together there is no doubt that the British type of executive is entirely unsuited to India.

The form of the executive proposed in the clause is intended to serve the following purposes:

- (i) To prevent the majority from forming a Government without giving any opportunity to the minorities to have a say in the matter.

- (ii) To prevent the majority from having exclusive control over administration and thereby make the tyranny of the minority by the majority possible.
- (iii) To prevent the inclusion by the majority party in the executive representatives of the minorities who have no confidence of the minorities.
- (iv) To provide a stable executive necessary for good and efficient administration.

The clause takes the American form of executive as a model and adapts it to Indian conditions especially to the requirements of minorities. The form of the executive suggested in the proposal cannot be objected to on the ground that it is against the principle of responsible government. Indians who are used to the English form of executive forget that this is not the only form of democratic and responsible Government. The American form of executive is an equally good type of democratic and responsible form of Government. There is also nothing objectionable in the proposal that a person should not be qualified to become a Minister merely because he is elected to the Legislature. The principle that a member of the Legislature before he is made a Minister should be chosen by his constituents was fully recognized by the British Constitution for over hundred years. A member of Parliament who was appointed a Minister had to submit himself for election before taking up his appointment. It was only lately given up. There ought therefore to be no objection to it on the ground that the proposals are not compatible with responsible Governments. The actual proposal is an improved edition of the American form of government, for the reason that under it members of the Executive can sit in the Legislature and have a right to speak and answer questions.

Clause 2

The proposal cannot be controversial. The best remedy against tyranny and oppression by a majority against the minority is inquiry, publicity and discussion. This is what the safeguard provides for. A similar proposal was also recommended by the Sapru Committee.

Clause 3

Social boycott is always held over the heads of the Untouchables by the caste Hindus as a sword of Damocles. Only the Untouchables know what a terrible weapon it is in the hands of the Hindus. Its effects and forms are well described in the report made by the committee appointed by the Government of Bombay in 1928 to investigate the grievances of the Depressed Classes and from which the following extracts are made. It illuminates the situation in a manner so simple that everybody can understand what tyranny the Hindus are able to practice upon the Untouchables. The committee said:

Although we have recommended various remedies to secure to the Depressed Classes their rights to all public utilities we fear that there will be difficulties in the way of their exercising them for a long time to come. The first difficulty is the fear of open violence against them by the orthodox classes. It must be noted that the Depressed Classes form a small minority in every village, opposed to which is a great majority of the orthodox who are bent on protecting their interests and dignity from any supposed invasion by the Depressed Classes at any cost. The danger of prosecution by the police has put a limitation upon the use of violence by the orthodox classes and consequently such cases are rare.

The second difficulty arises from the economic position in which the Depressed Classes are found today. The Depressed Classes have no economic independence in most parts of the Presidency. Some cultivate the lands of the orthodox classes as their tenants at will. Others live

on their earnings as farm labourers employed by the orthodox classes and the rest subsist on the food or grain given to them by the orthodox classes in lieu of service rendered to them as village servants. We have heard of numerous instances where the orthodox classes have used their economic power as a weapon against those Depressed Classes in their villages, when the latter have dared to exercise their rights, and have evicted them from their land, and stopped their employment and discontinued their remuneration as village servants. This boycott is often planned on such an extensive scale as to include the prevention of the Depressed Classes from using the commonly used paths and the stoppage of sale of the necessities of life by the village *bania*....

This was said in 1928. Lest it should be regarded as a phase which has now ended I reproduce below a copy of a petition by the Untouchables of the village Kheri Jessore in the Punjab addressed to the Deputy Commissioner of the Rohtak District in February 1947 a copy of which was sent to me. It reads as follows:

From
The Scheduled Caste People (Chamars),
Village Kheri Jessore, Tehsil and District Rohtak.

To
The Deputy Commissioner,
Rohtak District, Rohtak.

Sir,

We, the following Scheduled Caste (Chamars) of the Village Kheri Jessore, beg to invite your kind attention to the hard plight, we are put to, due to the undue pressure and merciless treatment by the caste Hindu Jats of this village.

It was about four months back that the Jats of the village assembled in the *Chopal* and told us to work in the fields on a wage in kind of one bundle of crops, containing only about one seer of grains per day per man instead of food at both times and a load of crops, and annas 8 in addition which we used to get before above announcement was made. As it was too little and insufficient to meet both ends, we refused to go to work. At this they were enraged and declared a social boycott on us. They made a rule that our cattle would not be allowed to graze in the jungle unless we would agree to pay a tax not leviable under Government for the animals, which they call as *Poochhi* they even do not allow our cattle to drink water in the village pool and have prevented the sweepers from cleaning the streets where we live so that heaps of dust and dirt are lying there which may cause some disease if left unattended to. We are forced to lead a shameful life and they are always ready to beat us and to tear down our honour by behaving indecently towards our wives, sisters and daughters. We are experiencing a lot of trouble of the worst type. While going to the school, the children were even beaten severely and in a merciless manner.

We submitted an application detailing the above facts to yourself, but we are sorry that no action has been taken as yet.

It is also for your kind consideration that the Inspector of Police and Tahsildar of Rohtak, whom we approached in this connection, made a careless investigation and in our opinion, no attention was paid to redress the difficulties of the poor and innocent persons.

We, therefore, request your good self to consider over the matter and make some arrangement to stop the merciless treatment and threats which the Jats give us in different ways. We have no

other approach except to knock at your kind door and hope your honour will take immediate steps to enable us to lead an honourable and peaceful life which is humanity's birth-right.

We beg to remain,

Sir,

Your most obedient servants,
Scheduled Caste People (Chamars),
of Village Kheri Jessore,
Tehsil and District Rohtak.
Thumb Impressions

Copy forwarded to the Hon'ble Dr B.R. Ambedkar,
Western Court, New Delhi.

Received on 1st February, 1947

This shows that what was true in 1928 is true even today. What is true of Bombay is true of the whole of India. For evidence of the general use of boycott by the Hindus against the Untouchables one has only to refer to the events that occurred all over India in the last elections to the Provincial Legislatures. Only when boycott is made criminal will the Untouchables be free from being the slaves of the Hindus.

The weapon of boycott is now-a-days used against other communities besides the Scheduled Castes. It is therefore in the interests of all minor communities to have this protection.

The provisions relating to boycott are taken bodily from the Burma Anti-Boycott Act, 1922.

Clause 4

Such a provision already exists in Section 150 of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Article II—Section IV

Part I—Clause I

There is nothing new in this clause. The right to representation in the Legislature is conceded by the Poona Pact. The only points that require to be reconsidered relate to (1) Quantum of Representation; (2) Weightage and (3) The System of Electorates.

(1) Quantum

The quantum of representation allowed to the Scheduled Castes by the Poona Pact is set out in clause I of the Pact. The proportion set out in the Pact was fixed out of the balance of seats which remained after (i) the share of the other communities had been taken out; (ii) after weightage to other communities had been allotted, and (iii) after seats had been allocated to special interests. This allotment of seats to the Scheduled Castes has resulted in great injustice. The loss due to seats taken out as weightage and seats given to special interests ought not to have been thrown upon the Scheduled Castes. The allotment of those seats had already been made by the Communal Award long before the Poona Pact. It was therefore not possible then to rectify this injustice.

(2) Weightage

There is another injustice from which the Scheduled Castes have been suffering. It relates to their right to a share in weightage.

As one can see the right to weightage has become a matter of double controversy. One controversy is between the majority and the minorities, the other is a matter of controversy between the different minorities.

The first controversy relates to the principle of weightage. The majority insists that the minority has no right to representation in excess of the ratio of its population to the total population. Why this rule is insisted upon by the majority it is difficult to understand. Is it because the majority wants to establish its own claim to population ratio so that it may always remain as a majority and act as a majority? Or is it because of the fact that a minority no matter how much weightage was given to it must remain a minority and cannot alter the fact that the majority will always be able to impose its will upon it? The first ground leads to a complete negation of the basic conception of majority rule which if rightly understood means nothing more than a decision of the majority to which the minority has reconciled itself. This cannot be the intention of the majority. One must put a more charitable construction and assume that the argument on which the contention of the majority rests is the second and not the first. That a minority even with weightage will remain a minority has to be accepted in view of the insistence of a communal majority to remain a majority and to claim the privileges of a political majority which it is not. But surely there is a difference between a defeat which is a complete rout and a defeat which is almost victory though not a victory. Cricketers know what difference there is between the defeat of a team by a few runs, a defeat by a few wickets and a defeat by one whole innings. The defeat by one whole innings is a complete frustration which a defeat by a few runs is not. Such a frustration when it comes about in the political life of a minority depresses and demoralizes and crushes the spirit of the minority. This must be avoided at any price. Looked at from this point of view there is no doubt that the rule of population—ratio-representation insisted upon by the majority is wrong. What a minority needs is not more representation but effective representation.

And what is effective representation? Obviously the effectiveness of representation depends upon its being large enough to give the minority the sense of not being entirely overwhelmed by the majority. Representation according to population to a minority or to the minorities combined may be effective by reason of the fact that the population of a minority where there is only one or of the combined minorities where there are many is large enough to secure effective minority representation. But there may be cases where the population of a minority or of the minorities combined is too small to secure such effective representation if the population ratio of a minority is taken as an inflexible standard to determine its quantum of representation. To insist upon such a standard is to make mockery of the protection to the minority which is the purpose behind the right to representation which is accepted as the legitimate claim of a minority. In such cases weightage which is another name for deduction from the quantum of representation which is due to the majority on the basis of its population becomes essential and the majority if it wishes to be fair and honest must concede it. There can therefore be no quarrel over the principle of weightage. On this footing the controversy becomes restricted to the question, how is the magnitude of weightage to be determined? This obviously is a question of adjustment and not of principle.

There can therefore be no manner of objection to the principle of weightage. The demand for weightage is however a general demand of all the minorities and the Scheduled Castes must join them in it where the majority is too big. What is however wrong with the existing weightage is unequal distribution among the various minorities. At present, some minorities

have secured a lion's share and some like the Untouchables have none. This wrong must be rectified by a distribution of the weightage on some intelligible principle.

(3) Electorates

...5. One of the issues which has embittered the relations between the Hindus and the Scheduled Castes in the political field is the issue of electorates. The Scheduled Castes are insisting upon separate electorates. The Hindus are equally insistent on opposing the demand. To arrive at a settlement on this issue—without which there can be no peace and amity between the Hindus and the Scheduled Castes—it is necessary to determine who is right and who is wrong and whether the opposition is based on rational grounds or is based on mere prejudice.

6. The grounds which are generally urged against the demand of the Scheduled Castes for separate electorates are:

- (i) that the Scheduled Castes are not a minority;
- (ii) that the Scheduled Castes are Hindus and therefore they cannot have separate electorates;
- (iii) that separate electorates will perpetuate untouchability;
- (iv) that separate electorates are anti-national; and
- (v) that separate electorates enable British imperialism to influence the communities having separate electorates to act against the interests of the country.

7. Are these arguments valid?

- (i) To say that the Scheduled Castes are not a minority is to misunderstand the meaning of the word 'minority'. Separation in religion is not the only test of a minority. Nor is it a good and efficient test. Social discrimination constitutes the real test for determining whether a social group is or is not a minority. Even Mr Gandhi thought it logical and practical to adopt this test in preference to that of religious separation. Following this test, Mr Gandhi in an editorial under the heading 'The Fiction of Majority' in the *Harijan* dated 21st October 1939 has given his opinion that the Scheduled Castes are the only real minority in India.
- (ii) To argue that the Scheduled Castes are Hindus and therefore cannot demand separate electorates is to put the same argument in a different form. To make religious affiliation the determining factor for constitutional safeguards is to overlook the fact that the religious affiliation may be accompanied by an intense degree of social separation and discrimination. The belief that separate electorates go with separation in religion arises from the fact that those minorities who have been given separate electorates happen to be religious minorities. This, however, is not correct. Muslims are given separate electorates not because they are different from Hindus in point of religion. They are given separate electorates because—and this is the fundamental fact—the social relations between the Hindus and the Musalmans are marked by social discrimination. To put the point in a somewhat different manner, the nature of the electorates is determined not by reference to religion but by reference to social considerations. That it is social considerations and not religious affiliation or disaffiliation which is accepted as the basis of determining the nature of the electorates is best illustrated by the arrangements made under the Government of India Act 1935 for the Christian community in India. The Christian community is divided into three sections—Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians. In spite of the fact that they all belong to the same religion

each section has a separate electorate. This shows that what is decisive is not religious affiliation but social separation.

- (iii) To urge that separate electorates prevent solidarity between the Untouchables and the caste Hindus is the result of confused thinking. Elections take place once in five years. Assuming there were joint electorates, it is difficult to understand how social solidarity between the Hindus and the Untouchables can be promoted by their devoting one day for voting together when out of the rest of the five years they are leading severely separate lives? Similarly, assuming that there were separate electorates it is difficult to understand how one day devoted to separate voting in the course of five years can make for greater separation than what already exists? Or contrary wise, how can one day in five years devoted to separate voting prevent those who wish to work for their union from carrying out their purposes? To make it concrete, how can separate electorate for the Untouchables prevent intermarriage or interdining being introduced between them and the Hindus? It is therefore futile to say that separate electorates for the Untouchables will perpetuate separation between them and the Hindus.
- (iv) To insist that separate electorates create anti-national spirit is contrary to experience. The Sikhs have separate electorates. But no one can say that the Sikhs are anti-national. The Muslims have had separate electorates right from 1909. Mr Jinnah had been elected by separate electorates. Yet, Mr Jinnah was the apostle of Indian nationalism up to 1935. The Indian Christians have separate electorates. Nonetheless a good lot of them have shown their partiality to the Congress if they have not been actually returned on the Congress ticket. Obviously nationalism and anti-nationalism have nothing to do with the electoral system. They are the result of extra-electoral forces.
- (v) This argument has no force. It is nothing but escapism. Be that as it may, with free India any objection to separate electorates on such a ground must vanish.

8. The reason why the arguments advanced by the opponents of separate electorates do not stand the scrutiny of logic and experience is due entirely to the fact that their approach to the subject is fundamentally wrong. It is wrong in two respects:

- (i) They fail to realize that the system of electorates has nothing to do with the religious nexus or communal nexus. It is nothing but a mechanism to enable a minority to return its true representative to the Legislature. Being a mechanism for the protection of a minority it follows that whether the electorate should be joint or separate must be left to be determined by the minority.
- (ii) They fail to make any distinction between the demand for separate electorates by a majority community and a similar demand made by a minority community. A majority community has no right to demand separate electorates. The reason is simple. A right by a majority community to demand separate electorates is tantamount to a right to establish the Government of the majority community over the minority community without the consent of the minority. This is contrary to the well-established doctrine of democracy that government must be with the consent of the governed. No such evil consequence follows from the opposite principle, namely, that a minority community is entitled to determine the nature of the electorates suited to its interests, because there is no possibility of the minority being placed in a position to govern the majority.

9. A correct attitude towards the whole question rests on the following axioms:

- (i) The system of electorates being a device for the protection of the minority, the issue whether the electoral system should be the joint electorate or separate electorate must

be left to the wishes of the minority. If it is large enough to influence the majority it will choose joint electorates. If it is too small for the purpose, it will prefer separate electorates for fear of being submerged.

- (ii) The majority, being in a position to rule, can have no voice in the determination of the system of electorates. If the minority wants joint electorates, the majority must submit itself to joint electorates. If the minority decides to have separate electorates for itself the majority cannot refuse to grant them. In other words, the majority must look to the decision of the minority and abide by it....

...Part II—Clause 2

This is a new demand but is justified by circumstances. At present, the Hindus live in the villages and the Untouchables live in the Ghettoes. The object is to free the Untouchables from the thralldom of the Hindus. So long as the present arrangement continues it is impossible for the Untouchables either to free themselves from the yoke of the Hindus or to get rid of their untouchability. It is the close-knit association of the Untouchables with the Hindus living in the same village which marks them out as Untouchables and which enables the Hindus to identify them as being Untouchables. India is admittedly a land of villages and so long as the village system provides an easy method of marking out and identifying the Untouchables, the Untouchable has no escape from untouchability. It is the system of the village plus the ghetto which perpetuates untouchability and the Untouchables therefore demand that the nexus should be broken and the Untouchables who are as a matter of fact socially separate should be made separate geographically and territorially also, and be settled into separate villages exclusively of Untouchables in which the distinction of the high and the low and of Touchable and Untouchable will find no place.

The second reason for demanding separate settlements arises out of the economic position of the Untouchables in the villages. That their condition is most pitiable no one will deny. They are a body of landless labourers who are entirely dependent upon such employment as the Hindus may choose to give them and on such wages as the Hindus may find it profitable to pay. In the villages in which they live they cannot engage in any trade or occupation, for owing to untouchability no Hindu will deal with them. It is therefore obvious that there is no way of earning a living which is open to the Untouchables so long as they live in a ghetto as a dependent part of the Hindu village.

This economic dependence has also other consequences besides the condition of poverty and degradation which proceeds from it. The Hindu has a code of life, which is part of his religion. This code of life gives him many privileges and heaps upon the Untouchable many indignities which are incompatible with the dignity and sanctity of human life. The Untouchables all over India are fighting against the indignities and injustices which the Hindus in the name of their religion have heaped upon them. A perpetual war is going on every day in every village between the Hindus and the Untouchables. It does not see the light of the day. The Hindu press is not prepared to give it publicity lest it should injure the cause of their freedom in the eyes of the world. The existence of a grim struggle between the Touchables and the Untouchables is however a fact. Under the village system the Untouchable has found himself greatly handicapped in his struggle for free and honourable life. It is a contest between the Hindus who are economically and socially strong and the Untouchables who are economically poor and numerically small. That the Hindus most often succeed in suppressing the Untouchables is due to many causes. The Hindus have the police and the magistracy on their side. In a quarrel

between the Untouchables and the Hindus the Untouchables will never get protection from the police and justice from the Magistrate. The police and the magistracy naturally love their class more than their duty. But the chief weapon in the armoury of the Hindus is economic power which they possess over the poor Untouchables living in the village. The proposal may be dubbed escapism. But the only alternative is perpetual slavery.

Part III—Clause 1

No country which has the problem of communal majority and communal minority is without some kind of an arrangement whereby they agree to share political power. South Africa has such an understanding. So has Canada....

...Unfortunately for the minorities in India, Indian nationalism has developed a new doctrine which may be called the Divine Right of the Majority to rule the minorities according to the wishes of the majority. Any claim for the sharing of power by the minority is called communalism while the monopolizing of the whole power by the majority is called nationalism. Guided by such political philosophy the majority is not prepared to allow the minorities to share political power nor is it willing to respect any convention made in that behalf as is evident from their repudiation of the obligation (to include representatives of the minorities in the cabinet) contained in the Instrument of Instructions issued to the Governors in the Government of India Act of 1935. Under these circumstances there is no way left but to have the rights of the Scheduled Castes embodied in the Constitution.

Part III—Clause 2

This is not a new demand. It replaces clause 6 of the Poona Pact which provides that the system of representation for the Scheduled Castes by reserved seats shall continue until determined by mutual consent between the communities concerned in the settlement. Since there is no safe method of ascertaining the will of the Scheduled Castes as to how to amend and alter the safeguards provided for them it is necessary to formulate a plan which will take the place of clause 6 of the Pact. Provisions having similar objectives to those contained in the proposal exist in the Constitutions of Australia, America and South Africa.

In dealing with a matter of this sort two considerations have to be borne in mind. One is that it is not desirable to rule out the possibility of a change in the safeguards being made in the future by the parties concerned. On the other hand it is by no means desirable to incessantly struggle over their revision. If the new Union and State Legislatures are to address themselves successfully to their responsibilities set out in the preamble, it is desirable that they should not be distracted by the acute contentions between religions and classes which questions of change in the safeguards are bound to raise. Hence a period of twenty-five years has been laid down before any change could be considered.

Article II—Section II, Part IV

The object of this provision is to see that whatever safeguards are provided for the Scheduled Castes in British India are also provided for the Scheduled Castes in the Indian States. The provision lays down that an Indian State seeking admission to the Union shall have to satisfy that its constitution contains these safeguards.

Article II—Interpretation

Whether the Scheduled Castes are a minority or not has become a matter of controversy. The purpose of the first provision is to set this controversy at rest. The Scheduled Castes are in a worst position as compared to any other minority in India. As such they require and deserve much more protection than any other minority does. The least one can do is to treat them as a minority.

The purpose of the second provision is to remove the provincial bar. There is no reason why a person who belongs to Scheduled Castes in one province should lose the benefit of political privileges given by the Constitution merely because he happens to change his domicile.

2. Demand for Representation in Constituent Assembly

Letter from Shiv Chand (on Behalf of Scheduled Castes of Simla Hill States) to J.B. Kripalani, 25 March 1947

AICC Papers, File No. CL-3, (Part 1)/1946-47, NMML.

Ref. No. 181/HSCA/47

Dated 25th March 1947

Sub: SIMLA HILL STATES AND CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY CASE FOR REPRESENTATION OF SCHEDULED CASTES

Sir,

On the 23rd of February 1947 a meeting of the Praja Parishad was held and on this occasion [*sic*] we were graced by the presence of Mr Kachru. A joint representation was placed before Mr Kachru, requesting him to consider the nomination of a representative from the Scheduled Castes to the Constituent Assembly, but he disagreed with our proposal, on the plea that unless we become members of the Parishad and get ourselves amalgamated into the regional council, we had no chance of having our grievances redressed although we formed majority of the total population of Simla Hill States.

Under these circumstances we humbly beg the President of the Minorities Advisory Board that taking into consideration the various factors, particularly our backwardness and age-old suppression at the hands of the upper classes, a representative should be nominated from amongst the Scheduled Castes Association to the Constituent Assembly.

We are entitled to send one representative of ours on that Body on population basis also. The total population of the Simla sector is approximately 16 lacs, of which Scheduled Castes count for about 65 per cent. The whole of this sector comprises 37 Hill States. The State authorities have long deprived us of our legitimate social, political and cultural rights. Whatever conditional rights the Scheduled Castes are entitled to in theory we are also being interfered with by the State authorities. In all these Hill States there are local councils, but the Scheduled Castes have no representation even on these petty councils. And when we do raise our voice in protest against these depressing conditions we are told that we are incapable of enjoying the rights we ask for.

Since it has already been made explicit in a ruling of the Constituent Assembly that a minority should enjoy the same rights of elections as other bodies, and since, irrespective of the fact that we have a clear majority the secretary of the Praja Parishad does not deem it

advisable to send our representative to the Constituent Assembly, it can well be inferred that we are being clearly deprived of our rights.

We might point out that the Scheduled Castes of Simla Hills were formerly organized under Himalaya Prantiya Koli Sabha. Recently the Sabha was renamed 'Himalaya Scheduled Castes Association'. This is the only representative institution of the Scheduled Castes of these parts. Our Association has twenty branches spread in the length and breadth of Simla Hills.

In view of the aforesaid circumstances we earnestly feel that our Depressed Class brethren should get representation. We sincerely hope that the President of the Minorities Advisory Board shall give sympathetic consideration to our case and nominate one candidate to the Constituent Assembly on behalf of our Association. In case a just decision is not forthcoming we fear it might have prejudicial effect on the interest of our majority community.

Hoping to be favoured with a sympathetic response.

I beg to remain,

Sir,

Yours most obedient Servant

Shiv Chand

President,

Himalaya Scheduled Castes Association

18, Chitter Gupta Rd,

New Delhi.

3. Parsis' Role in Building Up Modern India: Demand for Safeguards

Extract from Memorandum on Minorities by R.K. Sidhwa, 31 March 1947

B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), *Framing of India's Constitution*, Vol. II, pp. 318–22.

In more than one of the meetings of the Constituent Assembly, some members pertinently raised points that the Parsees do not come under the minority community and no reference was made by the British delegation in their Statement of May 16, 1946 in that respect. I have tried to explain to some of the members, but I do feel that the matter requires to be placed on record as to why the British delegation have not made any reference to the Parsee community as a minority community.

The facts are that the Parsee community though small in number is almost equal to the population of Anglo-Indians. Parsees were the pioneers in all walks of public life, namely, political, social, educational, commercial and industrial, and they always held progressive views in all these matters. In fact, efforts were made many a time by the British Government through their agents in India pressing the Parsee community to ask for a separate representation in various legislatures, but they flatly refused. It may be mentioned here that a year after the 1942 struggle for freedom, by the Indian National Congress, Mr Amery, then Secretary of State for India, made another effort to divide the Parsee community and made an offer for a separate representation to them. This was again emphatically opposed in a representation signed by nearly 2,000 Parsees holding university degree which was sent to him stating that their interests are safeguarded by sister communities. In view of all these facts, the British Government are perfectly justified in not mentioning the name of the Parsee community, like other communities who demanded special representation and special rights. This does not mean that when India is going to be absolutely free Parsees should not have any say in the framing

of the constitution for free India. The very fact that the Congress have been very generous in electing three Parsees in the Constituent Assembly refutes the arguments advanced by certain persons who are not conversant with facts....

Coming to comparatively recent times, the Parsees have contributed no mean share in building up the city of Bombay. In Karachi Parsees have played a very important part in the building of its civic and political life. Amongst the adventurous and intelligent brains of various communities who have built up the prosperity of this part of India so many of them were Parsees—mill magnates, merchants, traders, businessmen, bankers, brokers, financiers, educationists, social reformers, physicians, politicians, lawyers, parliamentarians and so forth. The first spinning and weaving mill in Bombay was started by a Parsee, followed in his footsteps by yet another Parsee. The pioneer of silk mill industry in India was a Parsee. Soaps and safes are synonymous with the name of a Parsee. The first Indian bank was sponsored by a Parsee. The iron and steel industry, hydro-electric ventures, scientific learning and research were all mooted by a Parsee industrialist of great depth of mind and vision, Mr J.N. Tata. The first hospitals, roads, wells, tanks, *bhandharas*, *dharamshalas*, schools, and other things, were built by a Parsee—Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy the 1st Bart., the king of munificence and benevolence. The first Indian to enter the Parliament was a Parsee—Dr Dadabhoy Naoroji, the political *guru* of Mahatma Gandhi and nearly the father of the Indian National Congress along with Hume, Cotton, Bradlaugh, Wedderburn and the rest. The first to fight for the civil liberties of an Indian and to show the way to civil and political autonomy was a Parsee—Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, the uncrowned king of Bombay. The name of Mr Jamshedji Tata, the founder of the House of Tatas, is only comparable with the name of Andrew Carnegie of America or of Lord Nuffield of England. Girls education was first sponsored by a Parsee Mr Malabari....

Parsee community though very small in number has by far surpassed any other community in the various activities of public life. In Karachi there are technical colleges sponsored by Parsees open to all communities without any distinction. There is a N.E.D. (Nadirsha Edulji Dinshaw) Trust Fund under the management of the Bombay University, which gives scholarships to Indians for training in Western countries and many Indians take advantage of the same. Sir Dorab Tata's Trust Fund sends a number of Indians to Europe and America for training in pioneer industries and various Indians have received scholarships for this training. While selecting the candidates for the last many years excepting very few Parsees, all other communities' persons have been sent to these countries. It may be mentioned that after Bombay, the large number of the Parsee population in Gujarat, namely, Surat, Broach, Ahmedabad and Navasari in Baroda State. Then nearly 3,000 reside in Poona. The population of Parsees in Karachi is about 5,000. It may also be mentioned that Parsees contribute a fairly good sum of taxes both to the Central and Provincial governments in comparison with population of other communities. Their contribution towards taxes and other matters if compared with the population of other communities would be greater in every respect.

Since then the other communities have followed past activities of the Parsees in all directions. This does not mean that the philanthropic, benevolent and patriotic work done by the Parsees compared with the number of their population should be lost sight of. Parsees have held the high posts of Judges, Magistrates, Advocate Generals, Public Prosecutors, Collectors, Commissioners, Directors of Agriculture, Inspectors General of Prisons, Police and Hospitals, Directors of various Government Departments. These they have obtained by sheer dint of merit and ability and not by any favour. Parsees have all along tried to stand on their own legs.

The upper class are generally in profession and business and lower middle class are employed mostly in commercial firms. The Parsees have lived in the past by the honest sweat of their brow and they want to live the same life under the new regime.

In short, the Parsees have lacked in nothing to build up modern India. They have helped the cause, whatever its nature, with their usual munificence, never caring for caste, creed or colour. Gujarat floods, Bihar and Quetta earthquakes and such other nation-wide catastrophes are a few instances. Indeed their charities have been cosmopolitan and many a well placed Indian has been able to acquire his education through the instrumentality of some of the Parsee trusts. Parsee catholicity is thus well known and needs no stressing. While doing so much for its neighbours, its fellow brother, the community as a whole has refrained from any spoon-feeding by a political junta or a social or economic organization. It has sought no favour and seeks none. But today it finds itself obliged to come forward only to ensure its place in the India of the future. Before the future constitution of India is framed and put on the statute book the community hopes justice will be dispensed fairly and it will be given freedom to cultivate and develop its innate genius according to its own cultural pattern and on its own lines compatible with national interest.

While we believe in the universal aphorism that no community can live its own life in the midst of an ever-expanding world, one cannot but admit that the Parsee community has led a unique existence of its own these thousand years and more and preserved its heritage. Today however as is natural it has begun to experience certain biological and socio-biological difficulties. For the last two decades it has displayed a falling birth-rate, especially in the city of Bombay and the logistic fit would go to show that two or three decades hence the population will begin to be stationary or even retrogressive. Already a microscopic community in the midst of 400 millions, the Parsees can no longer remain passive to their populational arithmetic....

The Parsees have today a separate Act for matrimonial purposes, which Act is known as 'Indian Act 3 of 1936—Parsee Marriage and Divorce Act.' This Act came into existence about 70 years ago and in 1936, when this Act was amended, objections were sent to the Parsee *Panchayats* in various Provinces, where the Parsees reside, to express their opinion and whatever suggestions were made, were accepted by the legislatures without a comma or a fullstop being changed. In Indian Succession Act there is a separate chapter relating to Parsees for distribution of shares amongst the children by parents after death.

We desire that Acts of this nature should continue to exist in the new Constitution and any amendment in these Acts shall be made only with the consent of the Parsee community as has been done in the past.

It is further suggested that no enactment affecting the religion, customs, personal law, endowments, and other cognate subjects should be initiated and passed except with their own concurrence obtained as in the case of Matrimonial Act and other Acts.

The above statement disposes of the various questions mentioned in the questionnaire issued by the Constituent Assembly Office. There are two clauses, however, Nos. 5 and 6, which are very important. As regards No. 5, I do feel that machinery should be set up to ensure that the safeguards, which have been provided in the Constitution for minorities are fully adhered to. I would suggest a minorities commission as outlined by Babu Rajendra Prasad in his Book 'India Divided', p. 381, which runs as under:

There should be an independent minorities' commission at the centre and in the provinces composed of representatives of each community (but not necessarily a member of that community) represented in the legislature, elected by members of the legislature belonging to that community.

No member of the legislature shall be eligible for election and the term of office of the members of commission shall synchronize with that of the legislature. The function of the commission shall be to keep a constant watch over the interests of minority communities, to call for such information as the commission consider necessary; to review periodically the policy pursued in regard to the implementation of non-justifiable fundamental rights and to submit reports to the Prime Minister. The recommendations of the commission shall be considered by the Cabinet and the Prime Minister shall place the report of the commission with a full statement of action taken thereon before the legislature which shall have facilities provided for a discussion thereon.

This may require certain changes in the above paragraph which can be discussed in detail at the meeting.

As regards clause 6, I am absolutely in favour of elimination of the safeguards granted to the minorities communities, within a certain period. Personally I would put its period upto the first election, namely, five years. I feel, however, that my view may not be acceptable to the other minority communities. Therefore maximum period of 10 years is to be put for the safeguards being continued. These safeguards should be so administered that they should automatically come to termination within a period of 10 years. For this purpose there will require some kind of provision in the Instrument of Instructions or in the Act. The relations between the various communities should be so cordial that they should feel themselves after the period of ten years that such safeguards are no longer necessary. If the period is not mentioned then there will be a kind of perpetual instinct in the mind of the minority community representatives that the safeguards are to remain for ever and it will be difficult for these small communities to come nearer with major communities. Ultimate phase of political life of all Indians should be one nation, no community.

4. Demand for Proportionate Representation on Population Basis and Socio-religious and Economic Safeguards

Memorandum on the Plains Tribal People of Assam by R.N. Brahma, March/April 1947

B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), *Framing of India's Constitution*, Vol. II, pp. 370-3.

The Assam tribal people living in the plains of Assam form an important section of the population of the Province. They were the dominant people with a distinct type of culture and civilization of their own in ancient Assam. Owing to their backwardness in education and their present deplorable economic condition these people have been now placed in a very miserable and helpless condition and in their present circumstances they rightfully deserve special safeguards for protecting their interests in the future Constitution of India. By the Government of India Act, 1935, these people have been recognized as an important distinct minority in the Province of Assam in the present constitution. For the first time they have been allowed four separate seats in the Provincial Legislature (Assam Legislative Assembly) with a separate electorate in four constituencies though according to their population they were entitled to much more seats. The tribal people in the plains are composed of different tribes all of whom are equally backward. All of them have retained their own dialects. They use their own mother-tongue among themselves and in schools they have been adopting Assamese language as their medium of instruction. The Kacharis or the Boro Kacharis form the major portion of the tribal population in the plains in Assam. The following main tribes should be included in the plains tribal population of Assam in the future Constitution of India:

- (a) *Assam Plains Tribes*: (1) The Kacharis—The Kacharis, the Boros, the Meches, Dimasas, Sonwal Kacharis, the Thongal Kacharis, (2) The Rablas, (3) The Lalungs, (4) The Miris, (5) The Mikirs living in the plains, (6) The Garos living in the plains, (7) Deoris, (8) The Khamtis, (9) The Singphos, (10) Akas, (11) Daflas, (12) Abors, (13) Mismis, (14) The Hajongs, (15) The Hajais, (16) The Motocks, (17) The Morans and such other tribes living in the plains of Assam.
- (b) *Ex-Tea Garden Tribes*: All the Indian ex-tea garden tribes who have settled in the plains of the Province of Assam.

There are Christians, Buddhists and Hindus among the Assam Plains tribes and majority of them have still retained their own tribal forms of worship and religion. It is the agreed and joint demand of these tribal people that irrespective of any religion these people should be grouped together and treated as plains tribal in the future Constitution of India on their ethnological basis.

1. *Scope and Nature of Safeguards*

The tribal people in the plains of Assam should have equal rights and privileges to enjoy all the fundamental rights of a citizen in the future Constitution of India. They should be proclaimed and made statutory. Certain limitations to the fundamental rights of citizens may however be prescribed in different Provinces according to local conditions, if it is found necessary for protecting the interests of the tribal people. Over and above the general fundamental rights of citizens the tribal people need some special political, economic, cultural and other safeguards both in the Centre and the Provinces for protecting their interests in the future Constitution of India. The special safeguards needed for the tribal people of the plains in Assam are detailed below:

2. *Political Safeguards*

- (a) *Centre*: The Plains tribal people in Assam demand their proportionate representation in the Central Legislature on population basis and also representation in the Central executives for the Plains tribal people. They also demand seats in the Central Cabinet.
- (b) *Provinces*: The Plains tribal people in Assam demand proportionate representation on population basis in the Provincial Legislatures with weightage of at least 25 per cent of the total seats allotted. In Assam the total population of the Plains tribal people will be about one-fifth of the total population of the Province and they demand representation on the basis of this population. It has already been stated above that the Government of India Act, 1935, has provided the tribal people of the plains in Assam with separate seats with a separate electorate. What should be the system of electorate for the minority people in the future Constitution of India is a matter which will have to be decided by the sub-committee, the main Advisory Committee and ultimately by the Constituent Assembly after full deliberations and discussions, after having the views from all the representatives of the different minority communities. So far as the tribal people of the plains in Assam are concerned some of them think that in the present circumstances joint electorate system with reservation of seats on population basis may be suitable for them but majority of them still feel that so long the Plains tribal people cannot feel their position secure in the hands of the more

advanced people there should be provision for representation on population basis with a separate electorate for the Plains tribal people in Assam in the future Constitution of India though they welcome the day when there will be no more necessity for such a separate system. They feel that they should be given the right of freely selecting their own representatives without interference of other people. Some think that a system of election by proportional representation with the single transferable vote may serve their purpose.

The tribal people of the plains in Assam demand that there should be statutory provision for reserving at least 3 (three) seats for the Plains tribal people in the Assam Cabinet or Ministry in the future Constitution for safeguarding and looking after the interests of the tribal people. They also demand adequate representatives on population basis in local bodies.

3. *Economic Safeguards*

- (a) *Centre:* The Plains tribal people should have their legitimate and due shares in Central Services, contracts and all other economic facilities and that they should not be exploited in business spheres.
- (b) *Province:* The tribal people living in the plains of Assam should be protected from being exploited in economic and business spheres. They should have adequate representation on their population basis in all Government services. There should be reservation of all the Government contract works on their population basis for the Plains tribal people. Where necessary they should be given preference and special facilities for developing and improving their economic condition. They should have due share in trade, commerce and industries of the Province.

Land Problem: In Assam the question of land problem has become very acute to the tribal people in the plains. Thousands and thousands of these people have become landless. They are being exploited by the immigrants and other more advanced people everywhere in all the districts of the Assam Valley in the Province. There must be some special statutory provision for protecting these Plains tribal people with their lands. Some blocks or belts will have to be created for these people where other non-tribal people should not be allowed to take settlement of lands and where the sale or transfer of lands to the non-tribal should be strictly prohibited. There should be reservation of sufficient lands for providing the landless tribal people with lands and for their future expansion.

4. *Religious, Cultural and Educational Safeguards*

Religion: There are Christians, Hindus and Buddhists among the tribals in the plains of Assam and majority of them have still retained their own forms of worship and religion. There should be full freedom of religion.

Cultural: Many of the Assam tribals living in the plains such as the Kacharis, and the Miris have got their own distinct cultural peculiarities. They have their own dialects, arts, traditions, social customs and usages. All the Plains tribal people in Assam should have the statutory rights to retain and develop their own cultural peculiarities.

Education: In Assam the Plains tribal people are the most backward people in education. Over and above the general provisions in the provincial annual budget where the tribal people should

have their due share, specific sums should every year be set apart as earmarked provisions from the public funds for the educational and cultural developments of these people in the areas where they preponderate. There should be reservation of sufficient number of scholarships both for technical and general education on population basis for the tribals in the plains in schools and colleges. There should be special officers, and a board or a committee to advise and look after the education of these tribal people. More schools should be opened in tribal areas. Adequate and sufficient aids should be given to the schools in tribal areas. In the areas where it is found necessary the tribal people in the plains should be allowed the option of introducing their mother-language or vernacular as medium of instruction at least in the primary schools.

5. *Machinery*

One of the Plains tribal Ministers who will be in the Provincial Cabinet or Ministry will form a board with other tribal members of the Legislatures and advise the executive head of the Province and see that the safeguards are effective. There should be statutory provision that the executive head of the Province shall have to hear and follow the advice of that Minister.

6. These safeguards should continue till the tribal people of the Province of Assam consider them necessary and till they can feel their position secure.

5. Sikh Interests in Punjab: Replies to the Questionnaire of the Constituent Assembly on Minorities

Extract from the Memorandum on Sikhs by Ujjal Singh and Harnam Singh, March/April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 121, NMML.

...Since the annexation of the Punjab with British India, the Sikhs have played a most noteworthy part in the making of the Punjab of to-day, and have made contributions towards the defence of India, and towards its economic and political life, which are out of all relationship with their small numerical strength but which are in keeping with their historic role in the political and cultural life of India....

Professor Coupland on p. 84 of *The Future of India* says:

The Sikhs form 15 per cent of the aggregate population of the province and the States and there is not a single district in which the Sikhs are in a clear majority. But the traditional qualities of the typical Sikh, the sturdy, free-minded peasant proprietor of the *Central Punjab*, where he owns most of best land, his energy, and toughness and courage and the great contribution, has long made and is still making to the strength and renown of the Indian Army give to the community an importance in the Punjab out of all proportions to its numbers.

Mr Robert Needham Cust, ICS, Secretary to the Royal Asiatic Society writing in 1859 described the *rich tract which lies between the river Chenab and Beas* as the original Sikh land, the cradle of the faith and the nursery of the chivalry of the followers of the Gurus. The state of affairs that existed in 1859 continues till today as detailed hereunder. ...

5. In the matter of the defence of the country, the services which the Sikhs have rendered are even more remarkable. The intelligent student of history knows that the credit of having effectively closed the North-West mountain passes through which hordes of foreign invaders have come to India to disturb its cultural and political life, for thousand of years, goes to the Sikhs. They are rightly described as 'the backbone and flower of the Indian Army.' Although the

Sikhs are less than two per cent of the population of India, their strength in the defence forces was over thirty per cent in the second half of the nineteenth century and during the last war it was about fifteen per cent. Even during this war, in spite of the fact that the Indian Defence Forces have been increased to 25 lakhs, which is more than 12 times its previous strength, the Sikhs are in the neighbourhood of 10 per cent in the defence forces. The quality of a Sikh as a soldier and a fighter does not need elaboration.

The Sikhs maintain that the Punjab is and must remain the homeland and the holy land of the Sikhs. The facts and figures on this point are so clear and overwhelming that nothing but sheer audacity can account for any claim to the contrary, including the facetious claim that the Punjab is a Muslim province, or that it comprises one of the homelands of the Muslims. The Sikhs have more than seven hundred historic Gurdwaras in the Punjab with rich endowments, and undying memories of their Gurus, saints and martyrs attached to them. The Sikhs have set up and are financing over 400 educational institutions, colleges, schools, seminaries and technical establishments, thus making a contribution towards the educational progress of the Province out of all proportions to their numerical strength and far in excess of any such contribution made by other communities, particularly the Muslims. The policy of and the atmosphere prevailing in these institutions, is more liberal and non-communal than that in any similar institution run by other communities.

In view of these considerations it is difficult to appreciate the Muslim claim that the Punjab is a Muslim province, particularly so when the non-Muslims own more than eighty per cent of the urban property and pay more than eighty per cent of income tax and urban property tax in the Punjab....

Having given the background of the Sikh case, we now proceed to answer the questionnaire.

1. *Nature and Scope of the Safeguards for a Minority in the New Constitution*

The existing safeguards for the various minorities as provided in the Government of India Act are mainly of a political nature, *that is*, communal representation in the Legislatures by separate electorates and weightage provided for certain minorities. The special responsibility of the Governors and the Governor-General in regard to the safeguards of the legitimate interests of minorities are provided under section 12(1)(c) and 52(1)(b). Besides, guidance is given in the Instrument of Instructions to Governors and the Governor-General. Section 298 of the Government of India Act, 1935, provides safeguards against discrimination in regard to acquiring, holding or disposing of property or carrying on occupation, trade, business or profession. Section 83 and section 242 provide educational safeguards and the position of Anglo-Indians in certain services. Such political safeguards will have to be provided in the future Constitution as well. Fundamental rights of the citizens will cover rights of every individual and will consequently provide some of the safeguards for the members of the minorities as well. In addition to these, the minorities require safeguards for the protection of their religion, language, and culture as well as for social and economic rights. All these safeguards shall be incorporated in the Constitution and shall not be repeated, altered, varied or amended without the consent of the representatives of the minorities affected.

2. *Political Safeguards (a) in the Centre, (b) in the Provinces*

- (a) (i) In the Central Legislature, 6 per cent of the seats shall be reserved for the Sikhs both in the Upper and the Lower Houses.

- (ii) At least one Sikh shall always find a seat in the Cabinet of the Union.
- (iii) Sikhs shall have reserved for them 5 *per cent* of the Central Services or at least $8\frac{1}{3}$ *per cent* reserved for small communities according to the existing arrangement should be split up on the basis of population of these communities to ensure a separate share for the Sikhs.
- (iv) In framing rules for the regulation of recruitment of the defence forces of India, the authority concerned shall have due regard to the past association of the Sikh community with the defence forces and particularly to the specified class, character and the numerical percentages of posts hitherto held by members of the Sikh community in the Indian army.
- (v) The Sikhs shall also be represented on the Union Service Commission and the various boards, committees and statutory bodies set up by the Union Government.
- (b) *Provincial Legislatures*: In Sind, Baluchistan, United Provinces, Delhi, Bengal, Bombay, Central Provinces, Bihar and Assam, the Sikhs shall be recognized as a separate minority and provisions shall be made for their representation in the Legislatures of the said Provinces.

In the North-West Frontier Province the Sikhs shall have representation of 10 per cent in the Legislature.

Punjab: The Punjab shall be divided into two separate autonomous units, but in case division of the Punjab into two separate autonomous units is not possible under the State Paper of May 16, 1946, the Punjab shall be divided into two sub-provinces, North-West Punjab and South-East Punjab. Each sub-province shall have its own Legislature and Cabinet to deal with its own affairs. In this set-up, affairs of joint concern, if any, shall be dealt with by a joint Legislature comprising an equal number of members elected by the sub-provincial Legislatures. The weightage to the Sikhs in the Joint Legislature shall be on the lines adopted for Muslims at the Centre.

In the passing of any bill, motion, or resolution affecting exclusively a single community, members of other communities shall not have a right of vote.

Executive: The executive head will be advised by the Cabinet of North-West Punjab in affairs relating to North-West Punjab, by the Cabinet of the South-East Punjab in affairs solely of the South-East Punjab and by the joint Cabinet in affairs of joint concern.

In the Cabinet constituted for the administration of affairs of joint concern, the representation of the Sikhs shall be at least 25 *per cent*.

In North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan, a Sikh Minister shall be appointed by rotation with a Hindu Minister.

In United Provinces one Minister for smaller minorities shall be appointed.

The Cabinet shall be chosen on the Swiss model, all the Legislatures and Cabinets having the same fixed term.

Services: In the Punjab 25 *percent* representation in the Provincial Services shall be given to the Sikhs.

The existing reservation of 10 *per cent* services for smaller minorities in United Provinces shall be split up on a population basis and a share fixed for each minority separately.

In North-West Frontier Province, the Sikhs shall have representation of 10 *per cent* in the services.

3. *Economic and Social Safeguards*

- (i) Freedom to choose one's occupation as well as to originate enterprises or industries of an agricultural, commercial, industrial or other nature shall be guaranteed in the Union of India.
- (ii) No subject of the Indian Union shall on grounds of religion, caste, creed, place of birth or descent shall be ineligible for any office in any part of the Indian Union or be prohibited on any such ground from acquiring, holding or disposing of movable and immovable property or carrying on any occupation, trade, business or profession in any part of the Indian Union.
- (iii) All nationals, subject to rules of recruitment and reservation made for various communities shall be treated on a footing of equality as regards admission to public employments, functions and honours, including military ranks and to public establishments.
- (iv) Officials may not be provisionally removed from office or provisionally or permanently retired, or transferred to another post with a lower salary save in accordance with and in the manner determined by law.
- (v) All citizens shall have an equal right of access to and use of public wells, reservoirs, tanks, hostels, restaurants, parks and all other places of public resort.

4. *Religious, Educational and Cultural Safeguards*

- (i) The preparation and use of '*jhatka*' meat in public institutions shall be allowed and '*jhatka*' meat shall be treated on a par with '*halal*' meat.
- (ii) No law shall be enacted nor any executive order made or promulgated to restrict in any manner or to any extent whatsoever the manufacture, sale, the keeping and wearing of *kirpans* by the Sikhs.
- (iii) Every religious denomination shall have the right to manage its own affairs, own, acquire and administer property, movable and immovable and maintain and control institutions for religious and charitable purposes.
- (iv) The State shall maintain intact all religious and charitable institutions and the endowments attached to them and such religious institutions or endowments and the properties attached to those institutions shall not be resumed or acquired by State action and the State shall not create by financial assistance or otherwise any endowments or institutions out of taxes not specifically and exclusively collected from the religious community for the benefit of which such new endowments or institutions are sought to be created.
- (v) The minorities shall have an equitable share of the sums provided for religious purposes in the State, municipal or other budgets taking into account the requirements of nationals belonging to religious minorities.
- (vi) The State shall provide special educational facilities and also facilities to enter public services for backward classes such as the Scheduled Castes, Aboriginal Tribes, the *Mazahbis*, *Ramdasia* and *Kabir Panthi* Sikhs and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. All such facilities shall be available to any member of these castes and tribes who embraces Sikhism.

- (vii) The State shall protect the culture, language and script of the various communities and linguistic areas in India.
- (viii) The right to employ Punjabi for the conduct of administrative and legislative business in the Punjab shall be guaranteed by the Constitution.
- (ix) The Constitution shall guarantee Punjabi to be the court and official language of the Punjab with option to the various communities to use their own script, if any.
- (x) The maintenance of minority educational institutions shall be provided for according to the same principle as the maintenance of other State educational institutions.
- (xi) The Indian Union guarantees that all minorities shall have equal rights with other citizens in forming, controlling, administering at their own expense, charitable, social and religious institutions, schools and other educational establishments with the free use of their language and the practice of their religion therein.
- (xii) Sciences and arts and the teaching thereof are unrestricted in the Union of India. Elementary education is obligatory and free in the primary schools. Instruction in their mother-tongue is guaranteed to children and religious minorities.
- (xiii) A minority school shall be established on the application of a national supported by the persons legally responsible for the education of at least 40 children of that minority provided that these children are nationals and that they belong to the same school district, and that they are of the age at which education is compulsory and that their parents intend to send them to the said school. If at least 40 of these children belong to the same denomination or religion, a minority school of the denominational religious character desired shall be established on such application.
- (xiv) Legislative or administrative measures providing State aid for schools shall not discriminate between schools under the management of different religious denominations.
- (xv) Religious minorities in the country shall have a right to establish autonomous institutions for the preservation and development of their national culture and to maintain special organizations for their welfare so far as it is not incompatible with the interests of the State, the organizations having power to levy the taxes for the maintenance of such institutions.
- (xvi) The State shall make provisions for the teaching of *Gurmukhi* in all educational institutions where a minimum of 10 Sikh students in one class are receiving education.

5. Machinery To Be Set Up to Ensure That the Safeguards Are Effective

- (i) The Constitution Act shall provide the establishment at the Centre and in each of the Provinces of independent minority commissions which shall be composed of a representative of each of the communities concerned,
- (ii) The functions of the commission shall be:
 - (a) to keep a constant watch over the interests of the minority communities in the area;
 - (b) to call for such information from the Government concerned as the commission may consider necessary for the discharging of its functions;
 - (c) to review periodically—for example once every six months—the policy pursued in legislation and administration by the Legislature and the Executive in regard to the implementing of non-justiciable fundamental rights and other minority rights

assured by the Constitution to the minority community and to submit a report to the Government concerned.

- (iii) The recommendations of the commission shall be considered by the Cabinet concerned as soon as possible. In case any of the recommendations are not accepted wholly or in part, the report shall be referred to the Federal Court and the decision on such report taken by the Federal Court shall be binding on the Government concerned.

6. Under the existing conditions of India, we do not see any possibility in the near future or even in the distant future when minorities will not stand in need of protection under the modern democratic constitution. If, however, majorities win the confidence of minority communities by their sympathetic and generous treatment, some of the special safeguards may automatically lapse. But others will still be needed to see that the minorities get opportunities for full growth, and enjoy due share in the governance of the country.

6. Safeguards for Minorities and Scheduled Castes

Reply by Jagjivan Ram to the Questionnaire on Minorities, 3 April 1947

B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), *Framing of India's Constitution*, Vol. II, pp. 330–6.

1. *What should be the nature and scope of the safeguards for a minority in the new Constitution?*

The nature of the safeguards should be such as

- (i) to ensure protection to religious and racial minorities (for example, Christians and Aborigines) from destruction, and
- (ii) to accelerate the assimilation of the other minorities (such as the Scheduled Castes) in the parent body by bringing them to an equal level with others in that community.

Such safeguards should cover the fields enumerated in question Nos 2, 3 and 4. Many of the safeguards can be provided in the fundamental rights. The following among others may be included in the fundamental rights in the Constitution:

1. All citizens are equal before the law.
Men and women have fundamentally the same civic rights and duties.
Public legal privileges or disadvantages of birth or rank shall be abolished. Titles shall be simply a part of the name and shall no longer be conferred.
2. Personal liberty is inviolable. No encroachment on or deprivation of personal liberty by any public authority is permissible except in virtue of a law.
3. The residence of every citizen is an inviolable sanctuary for him, exceptions are admissible only in virtue of laws.
4. The secrecy of correspondence and of the postal, telegraph and of telephone services is inviolable, exceptions may be permitted only by law.
5. Every citizen has the right, within the limits of general laws to express his opinion freely, by word of mouth, writing, printing matter, or picture, or in any other manner.
6. All citizens have the freedom of domicile and of change of domicile.
7. All citizens have the right without notification or special permission to assemble peaceably and unarmed.
8. All citizens have the right to form unions and associations for purposes not in contravention of the penal laws. This right may not be restricted by preventive regulations. The same provisions apply to religious union and associations.

9. Every union is at liberty to acquire legal rights in accordance with the provisions of the civil code. These rights shall not be refused to a union on the ground that its objects are of political, social or religious nature.
10. The freedom and the secrecy of election are guaranteed. Details are to be determined by electoral laws.
11. All citizens of the State, without distinction of caste or creed are eligible for public offices, as provided by law in accordance with their qualifications and abilities.
12. The organization of economic life must correspond to the principles of justice, and be designed to ensure for all a life worthy of a human being. Within these limits the economic freedom of the individual be guaranteed.

Legal compulsion is permissible only in order to enforce rights which are threatened, or to subserve the pre-eminent claims of the common weal.

Freedom of trade, industry and occupation is guaranteed without any distinction of caste or creed.

13. All citizens are equal before the law and possess equal civic rights. There shall be no law, civil or penal, substantive or procedural, of a discriminative nature.
14. It is the moral duty of every citizen without prejudice to his personal liberty, to make such use of his mental and bodily powers as shall be necessary for the welfare of the community. Every citizen must be afforded an opportunity to gain his livelihood by economic labour. Where no opportunity for his work can be found for him, provision shall be made for his support. Details shall be determined by special law.

Special protection shall be extended to women and young persons engaged in occupations injurious to health.

15. Usury in every form is prohibited.
16. Extraordinary tribunals shall not be permitted. No person shall be withdrawn from the jurisdiction of his lawful judge. No person shall be tried on any criminal charge save in due course of law.
17. All citizens have the right to free elementary education and of admission into any educational institution maintained or aided or recognized by the State without any distinction of caste, colour or creed.
18. No person attending any school receiving State aid or other public money shall be compelled to attend the religious instruction that may be given in the school.
19. Officials are the servants of the community and not of any party.

The land, sea and air forces of the whole country shall be above and outside personal, regional or party affiliations, shall be loyal to the State, and shall love and protect the people.

No party and individual may utilize the armed strength as an instrument in the struggle for political power.

20. All religions shall be equal before the law.
21. Every citizen shall have the right to keep and bear arms in accordance with the regulations made in that behalf.
22. All *begar* and compulsory or forced labour in whichever form existing anywhere shall cease and shall be dealt with as a cognizable offence.

The Constitution shall contain a provision that no law, order, rule or regulation infringing any of the fundamental rights shall be enacted or issued.

2. *What should be the political safeguards of a minority—(a) in the Centre, (b) in the Provinces?*

Political safeguards for the Scheduled Castes. (This may apply to other minorities as well.)

- (a) *In the Centre (Union)*: Seats shall be reserved for the Scheduled Castes proportionate to their population in:
 - (i) Legislatures
 - (ii) Services of all categories (civil including judiciary and military)
 - (iii) Executive (Ministry, Cabinet)
 - (iv) Commissions and committees which are statutory, standing, or may be formed from time to time
 - (v) Local bodies
- (b) The post of the executives shall rotate by turn among the several communities represented in the local body concerned.
- (c) Seats should be reserved for the Scheduled Castes in all services in local bodies proportionate to their population.

Scheduled Castes have never demanded weightage for themselves and have always insisted that no weightage should be given to any community. If weightage is to be given to any community it should come from the share of the majority community and the Scheduled Castes should also get proportionate weightage. If representation is to be given to special interests it should come from the share of the majority and not of the minorities.

Election to all seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes in Legislatures and local bodies shall be by the system of (i) joint electorate with the caste Hindus; (ii) adult franchise; and (iii) distributive voting in plural constituencies.

Scheduled Castes shall be free to contest unreserved seats in elective bodies and compete for unreserved seats in services and executives.

3. *What should be the economic safeguards of a minority—(a) in the Centre, (b) in the Provinces?*

Economic safeguards: Besides the fundamental rights Nos 12, 14 and 22, the following provision should be made in the constitution of the State (Centre or Provinces as the case may be):

- (i) All key and basic industries shall be owned and run by the State.
- (ii) All land shall be nationalized.
- (iii) There shall be a housing and homestead board to secure suitable homestead land and provide healthy houses to the Scheduled Castes. The details shall be determined by law.

The distribution and use of land shall be supervised by the State in such a way as to prevent abuse and with a view to ensuring to every family which has no objection whatsoever in working itself thereon, a dwelling and economic holding suited to its needs.

- (iv) Large forested estate in private ownership shall be expropriated by law with such compensation as may be determined and become the property of State.
- (v) All mineral rights shall vest in the State.

4. *What should be the religious, educational and cultural safeguards for a minority?*

A. *Religious safeguards*: Fundamental rights should provide ample safeguards. Every religious minority shall be ensured freedom to practise its own faith and have its own places of worship.

Observance of untouchability in any shape or form by any person in public places, places of public worship, public institutions, and places established or maintained at public cost and for the use of the public should be regarded as a cognizable offence.

B. *Educational*: Besides fundamental rights Nos. 17 and 18—

- (i) Provision shall be made by every Provincial Government for the free education of the students of the Scheduled Castes at all stages in all types of educational institutions maintained, aided or recognized by Government or local bodies.
- (ii) Provision shall be made in the budget of every Provincial Government for adequate sums of money each year for ameliorative measures for the Scheduled Castes.
- (iii) Provision shall be made in the budget of the Central Government for adequate sums of money each year for granting stipends to Scheduled Caste students for higher and specialized training in science, arts, and others, in India and abroad.
- (iv) Provision shall be made for proportionate representation of the Scheduled Castes in Senates, Syndicates, Courts, etc., of Universities and on governing bodies of all educational institutions.

C. *Cultural and Social*: Fundamental rights should include provisions for the protection of the language, culture, etc. of the minorities.

No disability, social, civil and religious, shall attach to any person on account of his birth in a particular caste in the society.

All citizens shall have equal rights and duties in regard to roads, places or public resort, water-fountains, reservoirs, tanks, wells, hydrants, rivers, bathing ghats maintained out of State or local funds or dedicated by private persons for the use of general public.

Criminal Tribes Act shall be repealed.

No person shall be debarred from acquiring landed property in any part of the State on account of his birth in a particular caste.

It shall not be obligatory on any person simply because he is born in a particular caste in Hindu society to perform certain social and religious functions. No person who performs certain religious or social functions in the Hindu society shall refuse his services to some castes of the Hindus.

5. *What machinery should be set up to ensure that the safeguards are effective?*

There shall be an independent Minorities Commission to deal with those rights which are not enforceable by a court of law, in the Centre and in every Province.

Its composition shall be as follows:

- 1. One judge of the Supreme Court (of the Provincial High Court in the case of a Province) who will be *ex-officio* chairman of the commission.
- 2. Three members of the Legislative Assembly elected by the members of the minority community in the Assembly concerned.
- 3. Three members of the minority communities nominated by the Government.

The commission shall have power—

- (a) to call for any information from the Government.
- (b) to call for any person, official or non-official to appear before it and give evidence.
- (c) to examine laws or rules which operate against a minority or minorities.

- (d) to examine acts of omission or commission on the part of the executive in administration of the privileges and facilities granted to the minorities and submit report to the Government.

Procedure: The commission shall examine on its own initiative or on an application from any person of the aggrieved community, in the matter of any infringement of the rights, privileges or facilities of the minorities, and submit its findings with a recommendation to the Government.

The Government shall, thereupon, take steps, legislative or administrative as the case may be, to give effect to the recommendations of the commission.

6. *How is it proposed that the safeguards should be eliminated? In what time and under what circumstances?*

Some of the safeguards shall have to remain for all times in the Constitution such as those guaranteeing religious and cultural freedom to religious and racial minorities. Political and other safeguards for these minorities may be eliminated after these minorities have been convinced that their rights shall be amply protected by the majority community even if they (minorities) are not represented in the legislature or the administration.

The various safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes may be eliminated as soon as untouchability totally disappears. It is, no doubt, difficult to ascertain the total disappearance of untouchability but for this purpose three criteria may be laid—

- (i) When all Hindu temples are open to all the castes in the Hindu society without any distinction or discrimination.
- (ii) When water or eatables of any caste shall not be polluted by the touch of any other caste of the Hindu society.
- (iii) When in all religious and social functions of the Hindus, persons of all castes of Hindus may participate without any discrimination.

As soon as this stage is reached, an official resolution seeking the elimination of the safeguards for the Scheduled Castes may be framed by the Central Government. A copy of this resolution shall be sent to every Provincial Government. The Provincial Government shall move this resolution in the Provincial Assembly. The resolution shall be deemed passed if it is passed by a two-thirds majority of the House and if two-thirds of the members of the Scheduled Castes present and voting vote in favour of the resolution. The resolution shall be moved in the Central Assembly if it has been adopted by all the Provincial Governments in the manner prescribed above. The resolution shall be deemed to have been passed by the Central Assembly only if it is passed by a two-thirds majority in the whole House and if two-third members of the Scheduled Castes present and voting have voted in favour of the resolution.

No resolution to the same effect shall be brought within the life of the same Legislature within two years of the rejection of the first resolution.

All the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes shall be incorporated in the Constitution of the units (State) which may join the Union at the very beginning or at a subsequent stage.



7. Demand for Minority Rights by Digambar Jains

Reply to the Constituent Assembly Questionnaire by the All India Digambar Jain Parishad, 8 April 1947

AICC Papers, File No. CL-3 (Part 1), 1946–7, NMML.

The Jains are an ancient community of India with its own distinctive religion and philosophy, worship and ritual, social customs and manners. It is now recognized amongst oriental scholars that Jainism is essentially a non-Vedic religion and philosophy and in this connection attention may be invited to the view of Prof Dasgupta and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The relevant extracts are reproduced below for ready reference.

‘Thus Mahavira was a contemporary of Buddha, but unlike Buddha he was neither the author of the religion nor the founder of the sect, but a monk who having espoused the Jains’ creed afterwards became the seer and the last prophet (TIRTHANKARA) of Jainism. His predecessor Parsva, the last Tirthankara but one; is said to have died 84,000 years before Mahavira’s Nirvana. The story in Uttaradhyaya Sūtra that a disciple of Parsva met a disciple of Mahavira and brought about the union of the old Jainism and that propounded by Mahavira seems to suggest that this Parsva was probably historical person.

‘According to the belief of the orthodox Jains, the Jain religion is eternal, and it has been revealed again in every one of the endless succeeding periods of the world by innumerable Tirthankaras.’

(Chapter VI, The Jain Philosophy—The Origin of Jainism—‘A History of Indian Philosophy’, by Das Gupta—p. 169.)

‘Buddhism and Jainism were certainly not Hinduism or even the Vedic Dharma. Yet they arose in India and were integral parts of Indian life, culture and philosophy. A Buddhist or Jain in India is a hundred per cent product of Indian thought and culture, yet neither is a Hindu by faith.’

(*Discovery of India* by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru—Chapter IV—‘What Is Hinduism’, p. 73).

Although Jainism is, to quote Panditji ‘a hundred per cent product of Indian thought and culture’ it is often forgotten that the Jains have distinctive social and religious customs. Even their ritual is still regulated according to the injunctions in the Jains sacred literature. It may also be mentioned that Jains have even a system of law of their own and attempts have been made by prominent Jains to secure its acceptance so as to regulate legal relations amongst the Jains according to their own system of law. It may also be pointed out that the Jains do not follow any Varna system nor is there regular inter-marriage between the Hindus and the Jains.

The Jains’ doctrine of Non-violence (Ahimsa), which is the foundation of the Gandhian creed, and universal brotherhood and tolerance are far too well-known to need special mention here. The Jain doctrine of Anekantavada and Syadvada represents a unique contribution to logic and can easily provide a theoretical basis for intellectual tolerance when the world is divided into ideological camps warring against one another. The contribution of Jainism to vernacular literature is noteworthy and along with the Buddhists Jains were the first to use the languages of the people for their sacred literature. It may also be mentioned here that the Jains have their own legal system. High Court Judges like Kumarswami Shastri, Officiating Chief Justice of the Madras High Court and Rangnekar of the Bombay High Court have held that it is utterly wrong to think that the Jains were originally Hindus and later converted to Jainism. Raghvachariar in his latest edition of Hindu Law (1947) supports this view.

In modern times the Jains have played an important part in all walks of national life and their complete identification with the national movement for freedom stands out prominently as compared with the role of other minorities who have often been obscurantist and demanded heavy price for their support. It is a matter of pride to us that the Jains did all they could to promote the Congress struggle for freedom and so far never asked for special or unusual concessions.

In view of these considerations we strongly feel that the Jains should be treated as a minority. They are a distinctive group with its own distinctive culture and it would be doing a grave injustice to the Jain community if they were merely treated as a branch of Hinduism. Besides this is utterly wrong. Because of their intellectual and moral doctrines they have been always ready to learn and assimilate whatever is good in other communities. That some of their customs and manners are indistinguishable from those of the Hindus only speaks volume for tolerance and good sense. It is unfortunate that the ignorant have therefore been misled into treating the Jains as only a section of the Hindu community.

The recognition of the Jains as a separate minority has now become necessary for at least two reasons. First, in spite of their glorious past and substantial contribution to the modern India, the community has been declining in numbers and it is not in a position to make its rightful contribution to the intellectual and cultural life of the country. Their ancient culture and civilization will need special care and protection when a permanent constitution is to be framed, the denial of the minority status to the Jains will mean their death warrant as a distinctive cultural group especially when all other minorities are going to be recognized. Even the legitimate sections of Hinduism like the Harijan and a small community like the Parsees are treated as minorities. Although the Jains hold important positions in industry and commerce and other spheres of life, as a community the Jains are backward. At one time the Jains formed a substantial part of the Indian population but today they number barely twenty lacks [*sic*]. We, therefore, demand in the first place that the Jains be treated as a minority and given all rights and privileges which may be given to other communities.

Q.1 What should be the nature and scope of safeguards for minorities in the new constitution?

Ans. With regard to the first question, the value and scope of safeguards for the Jains in particular will be a full provision for the protection and promotion of their culture, political and economic position in the community. Special provision will have to be made for education, health and other social services, employment in Government services, temples and other historical and cultural monuments, facilities for publication of sacred literature and promoting study and research in the universities as well as other bodies which the state might setup.

Q.2 What political safe-guards are needed for the minorities in the Union and Provincial constitution?

Ans. The actual safe-guards for ensuring the rights and privileges of the Jain community should be on parallel lines to those provided for the other minorities. The Jains should be given special representation in the administrative, executive, judicial, diplomatic, foreign and military services of the nation, of course subject to the Government rules and regulations which shall be applicable thereto. They should also be given special representation in the Central and Provincial legislatures, local self-governing bodies, as well as in all the official committees set up from time to time by the Central and Provincial Governments.

Q.3 What economic safeguards are necessary for the minority in the Union and the Provincial constitution?

Ans. With regards to the economic safeguards it is suggested that the legitimate interest of Jain Commerce, Industry and Trade should be protected against any communal discrimination. In all measures which involve distribution of national wealth the community should be given a special position in consonance with the present position of the Jains as well as general principles accepted for other communities.

Q.4 What religious, educational and cultural safe-guards should be provided to the minorities at the centre and in the province?

Ans. No legislation affecting religion, culture, philosophy, temples, *mathas* and their property as well as the personal Law of the Jains should be introduced without the consent of the Jain community and their accredited representatives in the Central and Provincial legislatures.

- (b) So long as the legal system is based upon the principles of codify [*sic*] Hindu and Muslim law the Jain Law should be accepted as binding as the personal law for the Jain community.
- (c) Special provision for education in all stages of the State system of education.
- (d) Special provision for research and study of Jainism in all its aspects in the Universities and other bodies set up for the purpose.
- (e) Special provision for the publication and distribution of the sacred literature of the Jains.
- (f) Special provision for the presentation of Jain monuments, temples.
- (g) Special protection for private institutions and organizations in their legitimate activities for the protection and promotion of Jain interests.

Q.5 What machinery should be set up to ensure the effective enforcement of minority rights?

Ans. In order to protect the interests of the minorities and to enforce their rights, a permanent commission consisting of accredited representatives of the various minorities should be set up both at the centre and in the provinces. All legislation affecting the minorities should require the prior consent of those commissions before such legislations [*sic*] is introduced and also should be approved by it. Any member of the commission may demand that the legislations affecting his own community should require the consent of that particular community. In case of dispute between the legislature and the commission the matter should be referred to the Federal Court and its precedents should be binding on both the legislature and the community concerned. It is suggested that in any central judicial machinery that may be set up there should be a special section which alone would be competent to decide both questions of law and fact with regard to the minorities.

Q.6 How is it proposed to finally eliminate these safeguards, at what time and under what circumstances?

Ans. The question of eliminating safeguards for minorities can only arise when complete harmony and concord are established and when the State enjoys complete confidence of all its components [*sic*] groups. It is not easy to visualize the future developments and much will depend upon the working of the legislature, the commissions for minorities and the judicial machinery. It seems to us that the best solution for entire problem of minorities will be to set up a second chamber both at the centre and the provinces consisting of accredited

representatives of the various distinguished cultural groups in the country with equal powers of legislation and executive with those of assemblies or councils that may be set up. A council of nationalities as an integral part of legislative and executive apparatus of the State will go a long way towards restoring complete confidence and goodwill. Such a council should give equality of representation to all component groups irrespective of their number or importance. For this purpose of minorities and distinctive groups should constitute special constituencies and representatives should be elected directly on the basis of adult franchise.

6 Darya Ganj
Delhi

Ugra Sen Jain
A.I.D. Jain Parishad

8. NWFP Tribes Oppose the Tribal Areas Sub-committee of Constituent Assembly

A Report of the Intelligence Bureau, Home Deptt., 11 April 1947
External Affairs Department, File No. 9 (71) NWA/47, NAI.

A report, for which a measure of reliability is claimed by the Deputy Director, Intelligence, Peshawar, has been received to the effect that on the 28th March, 1947, the Mohmand Jirga held at Ziarat Ghakhai adopted the following resolution:

We, Mohmands of the Independent Tribal Territory, announce to the Viceroy of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Governor, NWFP, that the Committee which the Hindu Congress Government and the British have jointly appointed without our consultation is illegal and is unacceptable to us. Therefore the need for its visit does not arise. We Muslim Pathans of the Tribal Territory regard this Committee as our enemy. As this has not the unanimous approval of our tribe in this connexion, they should be considered as thieves for whom we have proposed the severest punishment. We are independent and will remain so. We will never recognize anybody's suzerainty over us. We, Mohmands, and also other independent tribes record our deep annoyance against the British and the Hindus over the atrocities committed and still being perpetrated by the Hindus on our Muslim brethren in India and denial of the right of self-determination to the latter, and demand that Muslims should be given the right to establish an independent Muslim State with a view to prevent further destruction. If this division is not carried out at once it would mean that the British want Hindus and Muslims to fight to the bitter end and be destroyed.

G. Ahmed
Deputy Director (C)
11.4.1947



9. Reply to the Constituent Assembly Questionnaire by an AICC Member from Andhra

Letter from M. Jagannadharao to the Secretary, Constituent Assembly Congress Party
13 April 1947

AICC Papers, File No. CL-3/(Part 1), 1946-7, NMML.

Congress Sevak Sadanam

VIZAGAPATNAM

The Secretary

Constituent Assembly Congress Party

New Delhi

Dear Sir,

Recently a questionnaire has been circulated to all the members of all the legislatures by Sir B.N. Rau, Constituent Adviser to the Constituent Assembly, for their opinions regarding certain provisions to be included in the future constitution.

With a few Congress workers and some MLAs I have discussed the questionnaire. I felt that the results of those discussions should be communicated to you as well as to the AICC office.

I am enclosing the answers to the questionnaire herein. As you could be having a copy of the questionnaire itself, I have not included it here as an enclosure.

As these are answers to specific questions, other important matters, such as fundamental rights and duties and minority safeguards have not been touched.

However I would like to suggest that the inclusion of fundamental duties of a citizen is as much necessary and important as the declaration of fundamental rights. Facilities for discharging the duties as well as facilities for exercising fundamental rights should be secured in the constitution.

I request you to place these views before the concerned sub-committee of the Congress party in the Constituent Assembly.

Yours faithfully,
M. Jagannadharao
Member, AICC

Answers to the Questionnaire

Constituent Assembly

Introductory Notes:

(1) The Union Centre has limited powers having only a few subjects under its control, still it should derive its rights from the General Citizen. It should be a closely integrated unitary type of Government.

(2) At the bottom the villages should be considered as units and such village units should have a constitutional existence. The elections to the union centre may be indirect thro' the village councils. For a group of villages having a population of 5,000 in rural areas and for a population of 10,000 in urban areas there should be one council consisting of 9 members whose term will be 6 years and the elections to which shall be by rotation 1/3 vacating every

two years. The village councillors shall form an electoral college which shall elect the Union President and members of the union legislature.

These village councils shall have all the powers now given to local boards. The executive officer shall be appointed by the provincial Government and shall belong to the Government Subordinate Service. He shall carry out all functions except judiciary. Provision should be made in the Constitution for the provincial assembly to relinquish any of their rights and powers in favour of village councils without requiring any amendment to the Constitution.

NB. In provinces where provision is not made for such village council as above, the citizens through adult franchise shall elect 9 voters for every 5000 population in rural areas and 10,000 population in urban areas. And such voters in a constituency shall function as the Electoral College.

(3) The right to recall an elected member should be secured to the constituency. The right should not be exercisable for a period of 6 months from the date of election or during the last 6 months of the legislature.

If 2/3 of the village councils in any particularly [*sic*] constituency ask for the recall of a member, the member may resign or ask the president to refer it for a vote of the constituency. If the member resigns he can stand for re-election. If he asks the president for a vote of the constituency and if such vote is against him, he is [*sic*] should be disqualified from standing as a candidate in the two subsequent elections.

There should be no recall for the members of the upper house at the centre.

As for the village council, if 1/3 of the voters sign a memorandum specifying the reasons for recall and submit it, the village assembly (a meeting of the adult population of the village) should be summoned. The member against whom the memorandum is submitted, shall reply referring to the various points in the memorandum. The matter should then be put to vote (secret ballot) and if 2/3 of the voters present support recall the member should resign. (The quorum for village assembly should be 50 per cent of the voters.)

(4) Special qualifications and disqualifications for candidates in elections to the village council, provincial assembly and union assembly.

(1) Age: at least 21 years.

(2) Educational: Literate in the language of the Province.

(What constitutes literacy shall be decided by the Provincial assembly from time to time.)

(3) The legislators for the province and the union, should be whole time workers (they should not be employed otherwise) and hence receiving monthly remuneration from Government.

(4) A legislator should tour his constituency at least 90 days in the year and submit an annual report regarding the same to the president of the union or province as the case may be and also to the village councils in his constituency.

(5) Sitting members of the provincial assembly or village councils are not eligible for election to the union centre.

(5) The villagers should have the right to impeach the members of the village council. The document of impeachment should be signed by at least 30 per cent of the voters and specifying the charges. It should be presented to the circuit judge (referred to in the judiciary) with a deposit of Rs 300. The signatories should make out a *prima facie* case before the circuit judge.

Then the impeachment proceedings will be conducted by a tribunal, consisting of the circuit judge and 2 more members nominated by the District Judge from the District Bar Association. The deposit money is liable to forfeiture if so decided by the tribunal (for frivolous charges and other things).

Answers

(1) The head of the Indian Union shall be called the President do. Provincial Government do.

(2) For the union, he shall be chosen by an electoral college consisting of the members of the village council (secret ballot). For the Province he shall be elected directly by the electorate (adult franchise age limits 21 years) Secret ballot. [*sic*]

(3) The term of the office should be five years.

(4) He should be eligible for re-election for two terms.

(5) No statutory provision is necessary for rotation among communities.

(6) There is no need for a vice-president.

(7) No vice-president.

(8) The President should be the executive head of the state with similar functions as in Ireland. He should in addition have the following rights and powers:

(i) Appointing judges to the supreme Court by the Union President or the High Court by the Provincial President.

(ii) Right to send back legislation for the re-consideration of the legislature. (He can send it back but only once.)

(iii) He can submit important legislative enactments for referendum.

(9) There is no vice president.

(10) As in the Irish constitution, but after the verdict of impeachment is passed, it should be submitted for referendum before the president is removed. In the provinces where there is only a single legislature, the impeachment proceedings can be started by 40 per cent of the members of the house, submitting a petition to the speaker. The whole house then by a 2/3 majority should pass the verdict. If the result of the referendum shows confidence in the president, the legislature should be dissolved and fresh elections conducted.

(11) For temporary absence of the President, he can nominate one of the Presidents of the Provincial legislatures to act for him. In the case of vacancy caused by death or impeachment (between the passing of the verdict of the assembly and the verdict of the electorate or the election of the new president) a commission consisting of the Chief Justice of the supreme court and 2 members elected by the presidents of the provincial legislatures and the speakers of both the legislatures forming an electoral college and from among themselves shall act. A commission may act by majority. In the case of a commission acting, steps should be taken to elect the new president within 6 months of the setting of the commission.

In the case of the Provincial assembly, for temporary absence, the president can nominate one of the judges of the High Court to act for him. In the case of vacancy caused by death or impeachment, a commission consisting of the chief justice of the high court, the speaker of the assembly and one member nominated by the union president shall act. In the case of a commission, acting steps should be taken to elect a new president within 3 months of the setting of the commission.

B. Executive

(12) It shall be as in England (Cabinet system, responsible to the lower house or the provincial assembly).

(13) To ensure stability, any motion of no-confidence should have a majority of 2/3 of the members present.

(14) The cabinet shall be composed of not more than 15 members. A minister cannot remain in office for more than 3 months without being a member of the legislature.

(15) No statutory provision is necessary.

(16) joint responsibility and co-ordination of the cabinet is secured by convention as in England.

(17) The lower house at the centre and the provincial legislature in the province shall elect the Prime Minister who shall be appointed by the President. The Prime Minister shall recommend the names of the other ministers in the cabinet and President appoints them.

(18) The cabinet holds office until a vote of no confidence is passed by a 2/3 majority of the lower house. Individual ministers can be removed from office on the advice of the Prime Minister.

(19) As in Ireland, the president should be the titular head and all laws are promulgated in his name. He acts with the consent of the Premier [*sic*] and his cabinet except when the cabinet loses the confidence of the assembly. In that case he may in his discretion, dissolve the assembly and call for fresh elections or ask the assembly to chose another premier.

C. Legislature

(20) Legislature shall be Bicameral for the Union and of single chamber for the provinces.

(21) The upper house should consist of members elected by proportionate representation (single transferable vote) from the provincial legislatures, each province having not less than 2 and not more than 4 seats, depending on the population of each province, the total number being restricted to 60.

The lower house at the centre should consist of members elected by village councils forming an electoral college. There shall be one electoral district for a population of 20 lakhs and it shall be a single member constituency.

The provincial assembly should consist of members elected directly, one for every 2 lakhs of population. 10 per cent of the total number of seats in the assembly shall be reserved for functional representation (Universities, professional associations (merchant chambers, bar associations, medical associations, public libraries etc.), Labour and women).

(22) There should be reservation of seats for Mahomedans, Harijans, Sikhs, Christians, Parsees and Hindoos—where they are in a minority—the reservation shall be proportionate to population for bigger minorities and for smaller minorities (less than 10 per cent of the population, there shall be a slight weightage (10 per cent weightage)). The minorities can contest for general seats also. Election is direct and on the basis of joint electorate for all seats.

(Plural constituencies say returning 3 members—with single non-transferable vote may be considered if no provision is made for reservation of seats.)

(23) (a) Composition of the legislatures has already been dealt.

(b) There should be universal adult franchise minimum age being 21.

(c) Joint electorate with reservation of seats.

- (d) There should be single member returning constituencies.
- (e) The election to the Provincial Assembly and the provincial president shall be direct. Election for the upper house at the centre shall be indirect through the provincial assemblies, Election to the Union lower house shall be indirect, through the electoral college composed of the members of the village council.
- (f) The allocation of seats shall be according to population as stated above.

(24) The term of all legislatures shall be 5 years.

(25) The upper house shall have a suspensory veto for a period of 60 days in respect of bills other than money bills or urgent bills. If they have the support of 2/5 of the members of the lower house, it can request the president for a referendum. It may ask for a joint session where it does not agree with the lower house.

D. Judiciary

(26) There shall be a supreme court for the union. It shall have jurisdiction over the union constitution, inter provincial disputes and appellate jurisdiction over such cases where leave for appeal is granted by the High Court. The judges of the supreme court shall be appointed by the union President. Once appointed they cannot be removed except through impeachment. Impeachment of supreme court judges shall be initiated by one of the houses and the other house shall hear it as a court and at both stages there must be 2/3 majority of the respective house.

There shall be a high court for each province. The judges of the high court shall be appointed by the president of the province. Once appointed they cannot be removed except through impeachment. The impeachment proceedings should be initiated by the provincial legislature on a motion sponsored by at least 1/3 of the legislators and with a majority of 2/3 of the legislators. The supreme court sitting in a bench shall be the trial court.

Each district shall have one district court with one judge with appellate jurisdiction and also original jurisdiction.

There shall be circuit courts with one judge for a territory comprising of 1 lakh of population having original jurisdiction and dealing with all judicial matters, civil, criminal and revenue. The district judges and circuit judges shall be appointed by the High Court.

The circuit court shall be assisted by 3 assessors elected by the village council when dealing with cases concerning the members and property in the jurisdiction of the respective village council. Where inter village matters are at issue the assessors shall be elected by all the village councillors concerned forming an electoral college.

E. Amendments to the Constitution

(27) By an act of the legislature passed with a 2/3 majority in a joint session of the houses, the union centre can affect amendments in the constitution, except with regard to fundamental rights and minority safeguards, in which cases the amending bill should be further submitted for referendum before it becomes law, provided that no amendment altering provincial boundaries or rights of provinces is affected until in a referendum a majority of the voters in the province or provinces concerned consent. In a referendum on constitutional amendments the majority of provinces and the majority of voters must approve before it becomes law.

A majority of the provincial legislatures can initiate an amendment to the union constitution. When a majority of both the houses approve it shall become law except in the case affecting minority safeguards and fundamental rights when a referendum must be held.

Changes in the provincial constitution can be effected if the amendments to the constitution are passed by 2/3 majority of the provincial assembly and a majority of the voters in a referendum.

If 1/3 of the village councils pass any amendment to the provincial constitution, it shall be put before the legislature and if it is passed by a 2/3 majority it shall become law, provided however that where fundamental rights and minority safeguards are concerned the amendment must be passed in a referendum.

10. Demands for Political Representation and Socio-economic Safeguards for Depressed Classes

Memorandum to the Minorities Sub-Committee from the Working Committee of the All India Adi-Hindu Depressed Classes Association, 15 April 1947

B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), *Framing of India's Constitution*, Vol. II, pp. 381–3.

Historical Survey

1. The position of the Scheduled Castes in India is unique. It is impossible to find a parallel to it. They are 70 million in population and thus on a population basis they constitute the third largest community in India, the other two being the Caste Hindus and Muslims. It is not necessary to dwell at length on their past history and how their degradation has taken place. Suffice it to say that on arrival in this country, the Aryans, now known as Caste Hindus, took the first step towards the original inhabitants now known as Scheduled Castes—they submerged and suppressed them. The light of knowledge was completely screened away from them. The conflict of their economic and political interests with those of the children of the soil made them adopt a systematic suppression of the latter through the ages. They called themselves 'Arya' or virtuous and from time to time styled the original inhabitants as 'Dasyu', 'Chandal', 'Pancham', 'Antyaj', 'Varnasankar' and 'Bahiskrita' and other things. Eventually they went so far as to assign to the children of the soil the status of 'Asprisha' namely, untouchables—a system to which the world's history bears no parallel.

The latest name given by them to the Depressed Classes is 'Harijan' which connotes the offspring of 'Devadasis' or 'Murlis' dedicated in temples in the service of Gods or 'Hari'. This is in keeping with the names given to them in succession and is meant to perpetuate the inferiority complex. With the utmost emphasis at its command, the Working Committee of the All India Adi-Hindu Depressed Classes Association protests against and condemns the use of this disgraceful and humiliating term for the Scheduled Castes.

The Poona Pact

2. This much for the past. Let us now take stock of the present and look forward to the emancipation of the depressed classes in the new Constitution of a self-governing India. The experience of the last two elections held under the Government of India Act 1935 has proved that the system of joint electorates has deprived the Scheduled Castes of the right to send true and effective representatives to the Legislatures and has given the Caste Hindu majority the virtual right to nominate members of the Scheduled Castes who are prepared to be the tools of the Caste Hindu majority. In the Poona Pact, the panel system was provided to allay this but has proved totally ineffective. The process is not only cumbrous but does not provide any guarantee for the return of the real representatives of the Scheduled Castes. It is obvious that a

candidate securing the lowest number of votes in the panel is returned by Caste Hindu votes and the candidate securing the highest number of votes in the panel is defeated. This gives a chance to the Caste Hindus to set up dummy Scheduled Castes candidates and get them returned by Caste Hindus' votes. The Working Committee of the All India Adi-Hindu Depressed Classes Association is opposed to the panel system because it involves double election and does not ensure the return of the real representatives of the Scheduled Castes. Hence the committee urges the abrogation of the Poona Pact.

Constitutional Safeguards for the Scheduled Castes in the New Constitution

3. The Working Committee of the All India Adi-Hindu Depressed Classes Association demands that the new Constitution shall contain within itself provision for securing the following purposes:

- (1) For representation of the Scheduled Castes is proportion to their population:
 - (i) in the Central and the various Provincial Legislatures.
 - (ii) in the Central and the Provincial Executives.
 - (iii) in municipalities and all statutory local bodies.
 - (iv) in the public services.
 - (v) on the Public Service Commissions.
- (2) For their representation in the Central and the various provincial legislatures by:
 - (a) adult suffrage.
 - (b) by separate electorates or by reservation of seats in joint electorates provided that a candidate to be declared elected must secure 40 per cent of the total number of votes recorded by members of the Scheduled Castes.
- (3) For earmarking a definite sum in the budgets of the Provincial and Central Governments for the secondary, university and advanced education of the Scheduled Castes.
- (4) For reservation of Government lands for Scheduled Castes who are landless agricultural labourers through a Settlement Commission.
- (5) For the recognition of the above provisions as fundamental rights beyond the powers of the Legislatures or the Executives to amend or alter or abrogate.

4. The Working Committee further demands that the following fundamental rights shall be made part of the Constitution of India:

- (1) All citizens are equal before the law and possess equal civic rights.
- (2) All citizens have the right to education without any distinctions of caste or creed in the matter of admission into any educational institutions, maintained or aided by the State.
- (3) No person shall, by reason of his caste or creed be prejudiced in any way in regard to public employment, office of power or honour and the exercise of any trade or calling.
- (4) All citizens have an equal right of full enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges of inns, rivers, streams, wells, tanks, roads, paths, streets, public conveyances on land, air and water, theatres and other places of public resort or amusement.
- (5) No form of forced labour shall be permitted.



11. Report of the Sub-Committee on Fundamental Rights Submitted to the Advisory Committee

Extract from a Letter from J.B. Kripalani to Vallabhbhai Patel, 16 April 1947

B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), *Framing of India's Constitution*, Vol. II, pp. 169–76.

To

The Chairman,

Advisory Committee on Minorities, Fundamental Rights etc.

Sir,

We, the undersigned, members of the Sub-Committee on Fundamental Rights appointed by the Advisory Committee on the 17th February 1947 have considered the matter referred to us and have now the honour to submit this our report¹....

3. When the committee began its work, it was resolved that a difference should be drawn in the list of fundamental rights between rights which are enforceable by appropriate legal process and provisions which are in the nature of fundamental principles of the social policy that is to regulate the governments concerned. In this respect, the committee has followed the Irish model and adopted a middle course between the one adopted by the framers of the American Constitution and the one pursued in recent European constitutions which have mixed up the two sets of rights. The committee also were of opinion that while certain human rights must be guaranteed to every resident of the Union, other rights must be confined only to citizens and accordingly it will be noticed that some clauses refer to every person and other clauses to citizens only.

4. While the committee has drawn upon the American and Irish Constitutions as also upon the recent European constitutions, the committee has throughout kept in view the complexity of Indian conditions and the peculiarities of the Indian situation and has made appropriate changes. In certain cases, provision has been made for penalties and sanctions being enacted by the law of the Union for violating the fundamental rights. This is of course without prejudice to the provision which makes any law in contravention of the fundamental rights invalid or inoperative. A general provision has also been inserted for the enforcement of the rights by appropriate remedies before the Supreme Court to be established as a part of the Union constitution. The detailed provisions in regard to the enforcement of fundamental rights by appropriate writs and applications before the Supreme Court to be established as a part of the federal structure of the constitution will necessarily have to find a place in the powers and jurisdiction of the court to be so established as also in other provisions relating to the Union constitution.

5. Though clause 20 of the Statement of May 16, 1946 contemplates the possibility of distributing fundamental rights between the constitutions of the Union, groups, if any, and the unit, we are of the opinion that fundamental rights of the citizens of the Union would have no value if they differ from group to group or from unit to unit or are not uniformly enforceable. Rights of man enforced uniformly have come to be recognized as an essential condition of stable society. We recommend that provisions on the lines set out in the Annexure be incorporated in the new Constitution so as to be binding upon all authorities, whether of the Union or the units.

6. We are of the opinion that every citizen is entitled to free trade, commerce and intercourse within the territories of the Union unburdened by any internal duties or taxes of customs. At

the same time, we realize that many Indian States depend upon such duties and taxes for a considerable part of their revenue and cannot do without it all at once. Similar difficulties have arisen in the framing of the constitutions of other countries and unless there is a scheme for a smooth transition to free trade in the Union friction will inevitably arise. Some agreement will therefore have to be made with those States in the light of their existing rights with a view to their ultimate elimination within a period to be prescribed by the Constitution. Thereafter, there will be untrammelled free trade within the Union.

7. The committee was of the opinion that the right of the citizen to have redress against the State in a court of law should not be fettered by undue restrictions. The committee however was not able to draft a suitable formula as the matter required more investigation than has been possible in the time at its disposal.

8. A proposal was made that a clause should be inserted to afford protection against discrimination against citizens mainly by Government officers in public administration on the ground of race or creed or social status. The committee decided by a majority that this was a matter which should be further discussed by the Minorities Sub-Committee who may, if necessary, refer back to this committee.

9. In regard to any particular matters in which individual members have not agreed with the majority view, they have appended a note of dissent.

10. While we are agreed (subject to the minutes of dissent) on the main principle of the clauses we have recommended, we have not had time to examine in any detail the effect of these clauses on the mass of existing legislation.

11. Sardar Panikkar was nominated on 10/4/47 and joined our deliberations only on the 14th April. We had however the benefit of discussing the whole draft with him.

Signed on behalf of the committee.

J.B. KRIPALANI,
Chairman,
Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee

¹ Annexure not reproduced here.

12. Minority Rights

Extracts from Memorandum on Minorities by S.P. Mookerjee, 17 April 1947
B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), *Framing of India's Constitution*, Vol. II, pp. 336–43.

Fundamental and Minority Rights

1. The Indian Union is a sovereign federated republic.
2. All powers of government and all authority, legislative, executive and judicial in the Indian Union, are derived from the people of the Indian Union. (Ref. Article 2 of the Constitution of the Irish Free State, 1922).

Political Rights in General

3. All citizens shall be equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed, colour or sex and there shall be no discrimination made either through legislation or administration. (Ref. Article 123 of the Soviet Constitution)

4. All persons born or naturalized in the Indian Union and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the Indian Union; and all citizens of the Indian Union are citizens of the Province or the federated State wherein they reside. Every citizen is free to move throughout the Union and stay and settle in any part thereof, to acquire property and to follow any trade or calling, and to be equally entitled with regard to facilities for education, public employment and legal protection in all parts of the Union. [Ref. Art. 1(xiv), Resolutions of All India Congress Committee, Bombay, August 1931.]
5. All peoples or races of the Indian Union are component parts of the Indian nation and shall be equal. [Ref. Art. 5 of the Chinese Constitution.]
6. Every citizen shall have freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom of expression.
7. No person shall be arrested, detained, tried or punished, nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered and confiscated save by an order of a competent court and according to law. [Ref. Art. 1(viii), Resolutions, AICC, Bombay, August 1931.]
8. Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise his religion and religious observances subject to public order and morality. Everybody shall have the right to build places of worship, but the location of such places of worship shall not interfere with the freedom of any citizen to use a public highway without let or hindrance. [Ref. Art. 1 (ii), Resolutions of AICC, Bombay, August 1931.]
9. No citizen shall be subjected to any disability or prejudiced by reason of his religion, caste, creed, colour, place of birth and descent, or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling. [Ref. 1(v) of the Resolutions of AICC, Bombay, August 1931.]
10. All children shall have the right to free education up to the fourteenth year of age, and they shall have the right of admission without any distinction of caste, colour, creed or sex, in any educational institution maintained by the State, except in institutions founded, run or maintained by, or for any particular sector or community. Education appropriations shall constitute no less than 30 per cent of the total amount of the provincial, district and municipal budgets. [Ref. Art. 134 and 137 of the Chinese Constitution.]
11. There shall be no State religion. The State shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions. [Ref. Art. 1(ix), Resolutions AICC, Bombay, August, 1931.]
12. The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage. [Ref. Art. 1(x), Resolutions AICC, Bombay, August 1931.]
13. The State shall confer no titles. [Ref. Art. 1(xii), Resolutions AICC, Bombay, August, 1931.]
14. Every citizen shall have the right to keep and bear arms, in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf. [Ref. Art. 1(vii), Resolutions AICC, Bombay, August, 1931.]
15. Every citizen shall have the right to present petitions, lodge complaints and institute legal proceedings in accordance with law. [Ref. Bill of Rights, 1689 of the English Constitution, and Art. 18 of the Chinese Constitution.]
16. Every citizen shall have the right to compete in accordance with law, in State examinations. [Ref. Art. 20 of the Chinese Constitution.]

17. Every citizen shall have the freedom of secrecy of correspondence. Such freedom shall not be restricted except in accordance with law. [Art. 12 of the Chinese Constitution.]
18. Any public functionary who illegally infringes upon any private liberty or right shall, besides being subject to disciplinary punishment, be responsible under criminal and civil law. The injured person may also, in accordance with law, claim indemnity from the State for damages sustained. [Art. 26 of the Chinese Constitution.]

Minority Rights

1. The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected. [Ref. 1(iii), Resolutions of AICC, Bombay, August, 1931.]
 - (a) All minorities shall have equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense charitable and religious institutions, and start educational schools and colleges with freedom to use their own language and to practise their own religion therein.
 - (b) If in any village, or in a group of contiguous villages or towns a demand is made on behalf of a prescribed number of children of a minority community for a separate educational institution for them, the authorities concerned shall set up such an institution for suitable instruction through the language and script of the community.
 - (c) No child attending any school receiving State aid shall be compelled to attend religious instruction imparted in that school, or participate in religious observances, other than his own, that may be practised in that school.
2.
 - (a) All schools, colleges, technical and other institutions established by the minorities shall be entitled to the same assistance from the State and local funds, as similar institutions for the general public or the majority community.
 - (b) Any racial, religious or linguistic minority in any province may demand and secure the establishment of a separate authority or separate authorities for the primary, secondary and higher education of its members. In that case, the government shall provide to such authority or authorities financial aid which shall bear the same proportion to total government expenditure for primary, secondary, or higher education, as the case may be, as the proportion of the numerical strength of the minority to the total population of the Province concerned. [Art. 121 of the Soviet Constitution.]
3. No Bill, nor any clause thereof, nor a resolution introduced by a member of a legislature affecting one or the other communities, which question is to be determined by the members of that particular community in the legislature concerned, shall be proceeded with, if three-fourth of the members of that community in that particular legislature oppose the Bill, or any clause thereof, or the resolution.
(Lucknow Pact, 1916; also ref. to the Resolution of the Madras Congress, 1927, and the criticism of the Montagu—Chelmsford Report regarding the article in para. 1964 of the Report).
4.
 - (a) An adequate share for the minorities in the legislatures and other self-governing authorities should be secured by joint electorate and reservation of seats for recognized minorities. If any weightage is to be given it should be on a uniform basis in the Centre and in the Provinces. In no Province should any weightage be

given to the majority community, nor the minority be given less representation than is due to it on population basis. Reservation of seats should cease after twenty years or earlier, if the communities concerned agree.

- (b) The executive governments in the Provinces and at the Centre during the period referred to in clause (a) shall be of a composite nature reflecting the proportion of each community in the various legislatures, and enjoy the confidence of the minority community or communities concerned.

(The cabinet system in Canada depends on convention.)

5. During the transitional period aforesaid 50 per cent posts in all public service shall be recruited purely on merit as the result of open competitive examination, and the remaining 50 per cent filled on population basis by selecting the best candidates from each community. Communal inequalities, if any, in the first half should not be made up from the other half. This latter percentage should be reduced after every five years, by progressive stages and entirely done away with after twenty years.
6. Communities and groups of people in a Province who together profess a particular religion, or speak a particular language, or belong to a particular race, and who are not a majority of the total population of the Province, but are at least fifty thousand in number, shall be declared as minorities and the protection of their interests shall be guaranteed to them.
7. All citizens have an equal right and access to and use of, public wells, reservoirs, tanks, hotels, restaurants, parks and all other places of public resort. This shall not apply to religious institutions of any community.

Provided that no citizen belonging to a particular religious community shall be prohibited from entering or using a public place of worship of that community for religious purposes, merely on the ground that he belongs to a particular caste or section within that community (Sapru Committee p. 219, para. 307(5), proviso added).

No public authority or court of law shall, in carrying out the functions and duties entrusted to it under any law, recognize any custom or usage imposing a disability on any person on the ground that he belongs to a particular caste or an aboriginal tribe (Sapru Committee p. 219).

8. The rights of the Sikhs for the use of the *jhatka* meat shall be protected. (Sapru Committee, p. 242).
9. No law shall be enacted to restrict in any manner or to any extent, the manufacture, sale, keeping and wearing of *kirpans* by the Sikhs (Sapru Committee p. 242).
10. If the majority of citizens who constitute a minority within a Province living in more or less contiguous areas and numbering at least seven millions desire to form themselves into a separate Province for linguistic, cultural or economic reason, such Province may be formed in accordance with the following conditions:
 - (a) the proposal must be initiated by at least one-fourth of the representatives of such citizens in the Lower House of the Provincial Legislature, and supported by at least two-thirds majority of the members concerned.
 - (b) The resolution so adopted shall be laid before the Provincial Legislature, and if agreed to by it, shall be transmitted by the Provincial Government to the Union Government with the request to take necessary steps to give effect to the demand.
 - (c) If the Provincial Legislative Assembly does not agree, then the provincial government shall transmit the resolution and the proceedings of the Assembly with

its observations to the Union Government. If the Union Government is satisfied as to the desirability and feasibility of the new proposal, then it shall appoint a Boundaries Commission and make arrangements to give effect to the demand, provided that the Union Government, may, if it chooses, order a plebiscite amongst the adult members of the population within the area concerned, before it makes a final decision.

11. If the majority of citizens who live in more or less contiguous areas, and who constitute a minority within their Province, desire to be amalgamated with another contiguous Province, for linguistic, cultural, or economic reasons, a redistribution of provincial boundaries may be made in accordance with the conditions laid down in the previous clause.
12. The aforesaid rights shall be incorporated in the Constitution, and shall be protected and enforced by Government. There shall be a permanent Minorities Commission under the Union Government which in consultation with that Commission, shall immediately after the first operation of this Constitution frame the necessary rules and procedure for protecting these rights. [Ref. Art. 87–97 of the Chinese Constitution which have set up a Control Yuan to safeguard the fundamentals of the constitution.]
13. In every Province also there shall be a permanent Minorities Commission, consisting of the representatives of the minorities concerned to advise the Provincial Government and Legislature in regard to the protection of the interests and rights of the minorities. If the Provincial Government fails to protect the rights of the minorities, the commission may ask for the intervention of the Union Government. [Ref. Art. 87–97 of the Chinese Constitution which set up a Control Yuan.]

No citizen of the Indian Union shall be debarred from approaching the Federal Court for relief against the infringement of any of the aforesaid rights.

In case any Provincial Government fails to implement any of these rights, or in case any decision of the Minorities Commission either at the Centre or in the Province, or any decision on an appeal from an aggrieved person is not duly executed by the proper provincial authority in that behalf, then and in every such case, as far as only as the circumstances of each case require, the Union Government may make remedial laws for the due protection of such rights.

14. Laws, either of the Provinces or of the Union, in conflict with the Constitution are null and void. [Ref. Art. 140 of the Chinese Constitution.]
15. Administrative order, either of the Provinces or of the Union, in conflict with the Constitution are null and void. [Ref. Art. 141 of the Chinese Constitution.]
16. The interpretation of the Constitution shall be done by the Federal Court.

Electorates: Provincial and Union

17. The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage. Elections to legislatures, provincial and Union, and to all local self-governing bodies shall be through joint electorates, with reservation of seats for minorities according to population unless a particular minority does not wish to have any seats reserved for them.
18. In provinces where the Hindus are in a minority, they shall be treated as a minority and classed as such for the purpose of reservation of seats, and not included, as at present, in the 'General List'.

19. In a joint electorate whether for the Centre or for the Provinces, or for the local bodies, a candidate must secure at least 33 per cent votes of his own community and at least 10 per cent from the other community or communities.

Safeguards for the Services

1. *Regarding protection of Government servants belonging to minority communities in the Provinces:*
It is not possible to give any special protection to officers belonging to minority communities except by ensuring the independence and impartiality of the Provincial Public Service Commission, and its composition in such a manner as to secure the appointment of the real representatives of these communities on the commission in accordance with the proportion of their population to the total population of the Province.

It is accordingly suggested that the following provisions should be made in the Provincial Constitution.

- (i) There shall be a Public Service Commission in each Province consisting of a chairman and such number of other members as may be fixed by the Provincial Government, provided that the communities should be represented in the commission in accordance with the strength of their population in the Province....

13. Dissent to the Report of the Sub-committee on Fundamental Rights

Selected Extracts from Minutes of Dissent to This Report, 17–20 April 1947

B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), *Framing of India's Constitution*, Vol. II, pp. 176–98.

I

Clauses 9 and 24 give the citizen the option to learn and use the national language through the medium of either the *Devanagari* or the Persian script. We regret that our colleagues on the sub-committee did not find it possible to agree to the option being extended to the use of the Roman script as a further alternative. While those who have received English education may form a small part of our population, the fact remains that lakhs of Indians *are* familiar with the Roman script and that those of them, particularly in the South, who are not familiar at the same time with the *Nagari* or Persian script would find it easier to learn the national language and use it if they were able to do so through the medium of the Roman script. These considerations apply with special force to members of small minorities like the Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Jews who know the Roman script alone. So too the Indian Army has so far been successfully imparted training and education through the medium of 'Roman Urdu', which means Hindustani in the Roman script. That is a salutary practice which has made it possible for mixed regiments to be taught the national language without distinction of religion or province. If it is now to be abandoned, it will mean that our national army will have to take cognizance of the religious grouping or provincial origin of each of its soldiers, thus making mixed regiments difficult to organize and to educate. We trust, therefore, that the Advisory Committee will add the Roman script to those already specified in clauses 9 and 24.

M.R. MASANI

HANSA MEHTA

II

We are not satisfied with the acceptance of a uniform civil code as an ultimate social objective set out in clause 39 as determined by the majority of the sub-committee. One of the factors that has kept India back from advancing to nationhood has been the existence of personal laws based on religion which keep the nation divided into watertight compartments in many aspects of life. We are of the view that a uniform civil code should be guaranteed to the Indian people within a period of 5 or 10 years in the same manner as the right to free and compulsory primary education has been guaranteed by clause 23 within 10 years. We, therefore, suggest that the Advisory Committee might transfer the clause regarding a uniform civil code from Part II to Part I after making suitable modifications in it.

M.R. MASANI,
HANSA MEHTA
AMRIT KAUR

III

We regret that though the sub-committee was almost evenly divided on it, the majority of the sub-committee turned down the proposal to include a clause based on Article 54 of the Swiss Constitution on the following lines:

No impediments to marriage between citizens shall be based merely upon difference of religion.

The Special Marriage Act III of 1872, which governs civil marriages between Indians of different religious faiths, demands from both contracting parties at present the following solemn declaration:

I do not profess the Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muhammadan, Parsi, Buddhist, Sikh or Jain religion.

Such an impediment to marriage between two Indians is a reflection on our claim to common nationhood. Only as recently as February 26, 1947, Mahatma Gandhi is reported at a prayer meeting to have supported the idea of marriages between persons professing different religious faiths, each retaining his or her own religion without abatement. Unfortunately, such marriages cannot be solemnized in India today. Indians who have desired to marry a fellow national of another religious faith have had to leave the borders of India in order to get married without being forced to perjure themselves. It is only possible, however, for those with more than average means and facilities to leave the country for such a purpose and the law has actually prevented several conscientious persons of limited means who were unwilling to comply with the requirements from marrying fellow nationals of their choice. The incorporation in the Constitution of the proposed clause would render such a primitive restriction as at present prevails *ultra vires* of the Constitution. We strongly urge that this clause be inserted at a suitable place in Part I.

AMRIT KAUR,
HANSA MEHTA,
M.R. MASANI.

IV

During the discussions we recorded our vote against compulsory service in any form and adhere to this position. We are, therefore, not in favour of the 'explanation' as given under clause 15.

We look upon compulsion as against all tenets of democracy and would point to the danger of giving to the State powers of compulsion in any sphere of life.

We would instead suggest the creation of paid social service in both the Centre and the units for the spread of education and other nation-building activities.

In a country where there is no lack of man power compulsion is particularly out of place.

AMRIT KAUR,
HANSA MEHTA.

VIII¹*National Language*

Clause 9 as it stands makes Hindustani the language of the Union. In view of the terminology adopted by the committee it is clear that Hindustani shall not be the language of the units. I am of the opinion that Hindustani shall be the language of the State, *that is*, of the Union as well of the units. If each unit is given liberty as the clause does to make any language an official language not only the object of having a national language for India will be defeated but linguistic diversity will make Indian administration impossible.

I therefore am of opinion that for the word 'Union' the word 'State' should be substituted. It may be that the units may require time to make Hindustani their official language. There is no harm in giving them time. But there cannot be any doubt upon the issue that the units shall be put under an obligation to adopt Hindustani as an official language from the very start. There is a great danger of the Hindustani language becoming Sanskritized by Hindu writers and Arabicized by Muslim writers. If this happens Hindustani will cease to be a national language and will become a sectional language. Without a National Academy the Hindustani language will not be able to overcome this danger. It is therefore necessary for the Constitution to make provision for the establishment of National Academy on the model of the French National Academy.

Compulsory Service

Para (2) of explanation to clause 15 should be deleted. No country however peaceful and non-violent in its intention or philosophy can escape the necessity for compulsory military service for defending itself and its liberty when attacked by another nation. The fact must be faced that there are so many nations which are neither peaceful nor non-violent. Ban on compulsory military service by a nation living in the midst of hostile nations free to impose compulsory military service is nothing but wilful self-immolation which is contrary to wisdom and morally quite heinous.

B.R. AMBEDKAR

X

1. I have differed from my colleagues, or a majority of them, on the following:

- (i) Distinction between justiciable and non-justiciable rights;
- (ii) The right of married women to retain the citizenship of their birth;
- (iii) Reasonable restrictions on freedom of internal trade for reasons of social reform;
- (iv) Conscription for social service;
- (v) Right of conscientious objection to retain civil obligations;
- (vi) Property of religious bodies;
- (vii) Marriage as a monogamous civil contract;
- (viii) Guarantee to private individual property in certain forms of natural wealth [eg., Article 27 (now 26)];
- (ix) Right to work, or to employment.

Distinction between Justiciable and Non-justiciable Rights

2. While appreciating the distinction between justiciable and non-justiciable rights. I hold that, owing to the very fact of such a distinction being drawn, the latter category of rights would remain no more than so many pious wishes. Given this differentiation, the Union and the unit Governments will be encouraged to stress or invent excuses why any one of these non-justiciable rights should not be given effect to. By keeping them on the Statute Book without making them imperative obligations of the State towards the citizen, we would be perpetrating a needless fraud, since it would provide an excellent window-dressing without any stock behind that dressing.

3. There are, moreover, many rights in this category, which it may not be practicable all at once to give effect to. We have ourselves provided an illustration of this in laying it down as a fundamental right (justiciable) of the citizen to a given standard of education, free of cost to the recipient, his parent or guardian. Admittedly, such a policy may not be feasible all at once for reasons of finance and personnel. To meet this difficulty, we have made this right enforceable within a period of not more than ten years. Once an unambiguous declaration of such a right is made, those responsible for giving effect to it would have to bestir themselves to find ways and means to give effect to it. If they had no such responsibility placed upon them, they might be inclined to avail themselves of every excuse to justify their own inactivity in the matter, indifference, or worse.

Obligations of the State

4. At the last sitting of our sub-committee, the heading of that part of our report which deals with non-justiciable rights, was changed into 'Fundamental principles of social policy'. This is an improvement, as far as it goes. But unless these 'Principles of social policy' are specifically made *obligations of the State to the citizen*, the apprehension felt by me will be more than realized. For these are not, as I view the matter, mere directions of policy. They are rather mandates of the community to its organized representative, the State, to be carried into effect at the earliest possible opportunity; and not to be played with as mere catchwords to delude or deceive. There should, therefore, be no such distinction; and the 'Principles of social policy' must be categoric injunctions, or obligations of Government, to be given effect to as soon as possible.

(i) Obligations of the citizen

5. Lest the tale of obligations sounds one-sided, I would add that corresponding to the rights of citizens, there are also implied or declared obligations of the citizens. There is, I fear, too much talk of rights everywhere; and distressing silence in regard to duties. In a modern society, where the division of labour or specialization of function is so widespread and complex; where every individual is necessarily dependent upon the co-operation of his fellows, there cannot be rights only, without any thought or mention of duties. Rights and duties must go hand in hand, if we are to progress on right lines.

6. Not all these duties need, however, be expressly stated. From the nature of the case, many of them are taken for granted; *for example*, the duty to contribute towards the burdens of Government in proportion to one's ability; or the obligation to join in the tasks of national defence. Because of the comparative unfamiliarity of that other civic obligation—the duty to work—the right of the State to conscript the entire man-power of the community for social service must be expressly stated to be used if and when the State organizes the country's resources, and mobilizes the manpower to develop the same to their utmost capacity.

(ii) Married women's right to reserve her native citizenship

7. In the sub-committee's report provision is left to be made by the law of the Union, for 'The accrual, acquisition, and termination' of the citizenship of the Union. I am afraid these words might not include the case of a woman who, originally a citizen of the Union, marries a non-citizen, and yet desires to retain her citizenship by birth. The terms 'accrual, acquisition and termination' would not necessarily include 'retention'. It must, therefore, be specifically provided for in the fundamental rights of citizenship.

8. I may add that this matter has already been a subject of international convention. In times of war, particularly, women, originally citizens of the country, but married to those of another which may conceivably be at war with the former, may find themselves in great difficulty, unless the right to retain their native citizenship is expressly reserved. This will be particularly important if the Union of India does not eventuate, as contemplated in this draft, and some parts of this country become alien ground.

(iii) Restrictions on freedom of internal trade

9. Article 13, (now 14) even as re-drafted, does not permit restrictions being imposed by any unit on the freedom of trade within the Union on grounds of social reform. The resolve of a unit, for instance, to prohibit intoxicating drinks or drugs altogether within its jurisdiction, or stop other kinds of immoral traffic, will not be covered by the proviso permitting 'reasonable restriction in the interests of public order, morality or health'. For it may be argued that drinking or the use of drugs in moderation will not hurt the health of the user. They may even be needed as medicine. And 'morality' is too vague a term to be depended upon for this purpose. I would, therefore, like the ground of 'social reform' being added expressly to the exceptions permitted in that Article.

(iv) Conscription for social service

10. In the explanation to Article 15, I would like to substitute 'national or social service' in place of 'education'. I recognize 'education' as amongst the foremost of our needs of nation-building, for which conscription would be fully justified. But that

(*These words were omitted from the draft report subsequently)

does not make the claims of other items in nation-building, or social service, like health, the less urgent.

11. Later on in this note, I have argued for inclusion in the fundamental rights of citizenship the right to work or employment to be guaranteed to every citizen by the State. In order to make this guarantee real, every unit will have to prepare a comprehensive plan of its own development, to be integrated in an over-all National Plan. There is no hope of the immense poverty of India being ever remedied, and the people of India being assured a decent standard of living, without a National Plan for all-round development. Work can also be provided for every adult citizen, in accordance with the ability, training and aptitude of each individual, if there is such a plan in every region in operation. I am afraid it will not be possible for independent, sovereign India to make up the long leeway she suffers from, in social as well as economic matters, without an all-round plan, which organizes and provides work for every citizen.

(v) Right of conscientious objection

12. Article 16, Explanation III, provides: 'No person shall refuse the performance of civil obligations or duties on the ground that his religion so requires.'

If a civil obligation is imposed to kill rats as plague carriers, or commit any similar *Himsa* for similar reasons, a conscientious Jain would refuse to shoulder such an obligation, or perform such a duty. The right of the genuine conscientious objector, in such cases, should, I think, be safeguarded.

(vi) Property of religious bodies

13. Some of my colleagues have, I believe, dissented from the provisions of Articles 17 and 21 which relate to property of religious organizations. I would associate myself with them on the grounds they have mentioned; and add that all kinds of property in the hands of religious bodies escapes civic obligations by way of taxation, and other things. Death or estate duties cannot be charged upon such property, as it is in mortmain, the hands of perpetual corporations. I consider this unfair to the community, as it was the forebears of the present generation of the people of this country who made the original endowments; and I see no justification why such readily available and mobilized resources should not be available to the present generation to be utilized for the benefit of this and succeeding generations. I do not see any reason why they should remain for ever immobilized, and so cause a needless handicap in the task of the fullest possible development of our social services and economic resources for improving substantially the lot of the masses. Those articles are, accordingly, unnecessary and may be omitted.

(vii) A common civil code for social institutions as marriage

14. While accepting the principle of a common civil code, mentioned in Articles 41 (now 39) and 42 (now 40), I think it necessary to give some indication of the basic principles of that code. For instance, I hold that marriage should, in the eyes of the law, be no more than a civil contract of a monogamous character, that is, both parties must be of age, free from any coercion or undue influence, and entitled to equal rights and duties under the contract. No impediment should be cast in the way of freedom of choice in marriage on grounds like difference in religious beliefs between the parties. Nor should any special disability or handicap be imposed, such as that under the *Special Marriages Act* of 1872, under which intending parties to a marriage,—both Indians professing different religions, have to declare that they do not

profess any of the named religions. This leads to unnecessary perjury; and comes in the way of a real unification of this country.

(viii) Private property in certain forms of national wealth

15. Article 27 (now 26), guaranteeing, as it were, individual property should be made subject to some exceptions in regard to those forms of natural wealth, which, like land, flowing water in rivers, or lakes, whereon hydro-electric works may be based; mines and minerals, coastal waters wherein valuable fisheries might be found, are the sources of producing new wealth. These must be owned publicly, and operated for the common benefit. They should be open to the fullest possible development and exploitation by collective effort. No room should be left for a private proprietor to interpose his veto, in his selfish interests upon the proper utilization of such natural resources.

16. It is not merely reasons of economic efficiency in developing these resources, or of social justice in distributing their benefits, that dictates this exception against unlimited guarantee of the rights of private property. Reasons of national defence are no less imperative. There are minerals, for instance, found in the different parts of India which may prove of vital importance in the organization of national defence. The risk of their being alienated by a private proprietor seeking his own profit to foreigners, whose country may conceivably be at war with ours, is too great not to require being fully safeguarded against.

17. Nor should a private proprietor, individual or corporation, be entitled to keep these resources undeveloped if he cannot develop them himself. Such a dog-in-the-manger policy is no figment of imagination. Moreover, these are not all perennial assets. Once exhausted, a mine cannot be renewed. Once denuded, a forest will take long years to replace. Pearl fisheries need to be carefully protected, even as whale hunting has had to be regulated by international convention. Such protection or regulation will not be easy unless the rights of ultimate ownership in these forms of natural wealth are reserved to the community.

18. We must, therefore, see to it that the fullest opportunity is provided for the utmost utilization of such sources of new wealth by collective effort for the common benefit. If individual proprietors have to be expropriated for this purpose, reasonable compensation should be given to them. But even here, it must be remembered that, in the case of developed land and exploited mines at least, the individual proprietor must have, in many cases, benefited himself several times over the value of his property. This should be taken into account before any policy of expropriation with compensation is adopted and carried into effect.

(ix) Right to work, or to employment

19. The right to gainful employment, or useful work, should be guaranteed to every citizen, as part of the fundamental rights. It must be amongst the most imperative *Obligations of the State* to organize, coordinate and distribute productive work, so that no able-bodied citizen be unable to get work suited to his qualifications, taste, or aptitude. None should be a parasite, none a burden or a nuisance to society, who can work for his living.

20. Without this right being guaranteed, all other rights and freedom will be meaningless. As the late President Roosevelt has said: 'Necessitous men are not free men'. People who are out of job, to use the language of the same great statesman and democrat, are the stuff of which dictatorships are made. Individual freedom cannot exist without economic security; and that is why he included it amongst the famous four freedoms which were to be the appropriate foundation as well as symbol for the new age of freedom and democracy.

21. The provision in Article 37(i) [now 35(ii)] of the Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee's Report,—that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood,—and later on to some sort of social insurance or security is not enough, not only because it was included among the non-justiciable rights,—only pious wishes or mere principles of policy for the general guidance of the State; but also because it might be interpreted as satisfied if the State institutes some form of dole to the unemployed, or provides something like our existing Famine Relief Work. I would like it to be categorically asserted and assured as a fundamental right. In consequence an imperative obligation will have to be shouldered by the State to organize and provide remunerative work to every citizen in accordance with the training, taste, or aptitude of each, so that there be no suspicion of charity in the work provided by public agency for those who cannot get it under private enterprise.

22. In times of depression, it has, already become the practice, in all advanced communities conscious of the responsibility of the community to the individual, to 'create' work for unemployed citizens. This may take the shape of public works,—like roads, wells, canals, soil conservation and other things. Work organized and provided under the Famine Relief Code in India is an instance of the same kind.

23. These are, however, all cases of uncoordinated effort, undertaken spasmodically, when a widespread emergency actually occurs. Such work also involves some kind of a stigma of charity. It is admittedly of a temporary nature, which would be given up the moment the particular emergency is over. There is thus needless waste in money as well as energy, which may well be used to much better purpose, if all work in the community is carefully planned in advance, mutually adjusted and co-ordinated, and scientifically distributed among the workers according to the ability, aptitude and qualifications of each. Such work would not be unproductive, as it would include the entire effort of the community, properly organized, so as to develop fully all its productive resources, services and utilities, and thereby provide useful work to every member able and qualified for the purpose.

24. The right to gainful work or useful employment is assured to the *citizen only*. Such work, if it is to be fruitful, must be adjusted to the capacity,—physical as well as mental,—training and aptitude of the worker. In view of the large numbers enjoying this right, and in view also of equal pay for equal work, there need be no fear of too many seeking a few lines of employment only, and other lines suffering from shortage of workers, provided there is a proper planning and assignment of the work in advance.

25. The right, it need hardly be added, is coupled with the duty to work. None shall starve who works; but none shall eat who does not work. This must be categorically laid down as an unexceptioned maxim of our national policy, to be given effect to by the State organizing and providing suitable work for every citizen in accordance with each one's capacity and qualifications.

26. Exception to the rule may be permitted in all cases where, owing to temporary illness or accident or permanent disability due to old age, an individual is incapacitated from normal work. Every endeavour should be made to find work suitable for those suffering from remediable disabilities. With a nation-wide plan including all occupations, this would cause no difficulty. Those temporarily incapacitated by illness or accident should be excused ordinary work for the time being and care provided for them under a national system of social security or insurance.

27. Children of school-going age at school must be regarded as preparing for work when they have received proper training. Just as providing for their education up to a minimum

standard is agreed to be an obligation of the State, so, too, the provision of work for them when they are duly trained and qualified should be a national obligation, to be discharged through the Government of each unit, aided and advised when required by the National or Union Government. Public expenditure on the education of the people or their health is no waste. It is the soundest of all national investments.

28. The same principle must apply to the case of the aged and the superannuated. They must be taken to have worked sufficiently in their youth and health to have earned their pension. They deserve maintenance by the community in their old age and incapacity and be excused hard work. Provision on this account should also be considered as in the nature of insurance benefit, for which, hereafter at least, every worker should be required to contribute his premium. The scheme will then become self-sufficient, and the aged, indisposed, or incapacitated worker will receive no favour or charity when he accepts his insurance benefit as his due.

29. The report of the Sub-Committee on Fundamental Rights provides that equal work should be equally remunerated, for men as well as women. The work of the housewife in the home must be treated, for purposes of this right (or rather as a matter of national accounting) as useful work, which must be fully recognized as such by the State. Real emancipation of women will not be possible without this recognition.

30. Apart from these exceptions,—if they may be called exceptions,—no exemption should be allowed from the civil obligation to work, or the State's duty to provide employment. As in the case of the State's obligation to provide a prescribed minimum of education to every child in the community, free of cost, which is permitted under the report of the sub-committee to be made good in ten years, this obligation too, may be allowed to be fully discharged in a like or less time.

31. For this right to be real and of daily enjoyment it may be that wholesale reorganization and reconditioning of our national economy will become necessary. That is, however, inevitable in any case, if we desire to resume our arrested march for progress and economic development. If the community realizes the advantage of such planned development, the objective sought to be attained under this right would be attained in less time than seems likely today. It is all a matter of national conscience and the national will to make Swaraj real and lasting for all.

K.T. SHAH

¹ Minutes V to VII not reproduced here.

14. A Comment on the 'Freedom of Religion' Clause

A Note by Rajkumari Amrit Kaur

20 April 1947

B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), *Framing of India's Constitution*, Vol. II, pp. 212–13.

I beg to submit my emphatic opposition to the revision by the Minorities Committee of clause 16 of the report of the Fundamental Rights Committee. The matter was thoroughly discussed in the latter committee and the words 'free practice of religion' were deliberately omitted. It was felt that they would not only be a bar to future social legislation but would even invalidate past legislation such as the Widow Remarriage Act, the Sarda Act or even the law abolishing *sati*. Everyone is aware how many evil practices, which one would like to abolish, are carried

on in the name of religion, for example, *pardah*, polygamy, caste disabilities, animal sacrifice, dedication of girls to temples, to mention a few.

The propagation of religion is amply assured in clause 10 dealing with freedom of speech and expression.

Since conversion by force or undue influence only is to be banned, it follows that conversion of an adult to any religion by reason of conviction will be permissible.

Freedom of religious worship, freedom of conscience and free profession of religion should really give to the individual and community all he or it needs.

The clause, as revised, is also going to make it extremely difficult for the State to ban religious meetings or processions that may be adjudged to lead to communal strife or public disorder. Such bans may be defied on the plea that they are an encroachment on fundamental rights and endless litigation may ensue. I am informed that the right to religious processions has in fact been the subject of litigation in courts right up to the Privy Council.

To make the 'free practice of religion' a justiciable right is, I submit, an error and will defeat not only social progress but will keep alive communal strife.

There are other points in the Minorities Committee's Annexure to which I am opposed but I will raise these as they come up for discussion in the Advisory Committee.

15. Interim Report of Committee on Minorities and Fundamental Rights

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to the President, Constituent Assembly, 23 April 1947

Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. III, pp. 437–44.

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA

No. CA/24/COM/47

Council House,

New Delhi, the 23rd April, 1947

FROM

THE HON'BLE SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL,
*Chairman, Advisory Committee on Minorities,
Fundamental Rights, etc.*

To

THE PRESIDENT,
Constituent Assembly of India

SIR,

On behalf of the members of the Advisory Committee appointed by the Constituent Assembly of India on the 24th January, 1947, I have the honour to submit this interim report on fundamental rights.¹ In coming to its conclusions, the Committee has taken into consideration not merely the report of the Sub-Committee on fundamental rights but also the comments thereon of the Minorities Sub-Committee.

2. The Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee recommended that the list of fundamental rights should be prepared in two parts, the first part consisting of rights enforceable by appropriate legal process and the second consisting of directive principles of social policy which, though

not enforceable in Courts, are nevertheless to be regarded as fundamental in the governance of the country. On these latter, we propose to submit a subsequent report; at present, we have confined ourselves to an examination only of the justiciable fundamental rights.

3. We attach great importance to the constitution making these rights justiciable. The right of the citizen to be protected in certain matters is a special feature of the American constitution and the more recent democratic constitutions. In the portion of the Constitution Act, dealing with the powers and jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, suitable and adequate provision will have to be made to define the scope of the remedies for the enforcement of these fundamental rights. These remedies have been indicated in general terms in clause 22 of the Annexure.

4. Clause 20 of the Statement of May 16, 1946, contemplates the possibility of distributing fundamental rights between the constitutions of the Union, the Groups, if any, and the Units. We are of the opinion that fundamental rights of the citizens of the Union would have no value if they differed from Group to Group or from Unit to Unit or are not uniformly enforceable. We recommend that the rights set out in the Annexure to this report be incorporated in the constitution so as to be binding upon all authorities, whether of the Union or the Units.

5. Clause 10 deals with the freedom, throughout the Union, of trade, commerce and intercourse between the citizens. In dealing with this clause, we have taken into account the fact that several Indian States depend upon internal customs for a considerable part of their revenue and it may not be easy for them to abolish such duties immediately on the coming into force of the Constitution Act. We, therefore, consider that it would be reasonable for the Union to enter into agreements with such States, in the light of their existing rights, with a view to giving them time, up to a maximum period to be prescribed by the constitution, by which internal customs could be eliminated and complete free trade established within the Union.

6. We have made a special provision in regard to full faith and credit being given to the public Acts, records and judicial proceedings of the Union in every Unit and for the judgments and orders of one Unit being enforced in another Unit. We regard this provision as very important and appropriately falling within the scope of fundamental rights.

7. Clause 2 lays down that all existing laws, regulations, notifications, custom or usage in force within the territories of the Union inconsistent with the fundamental rights shall stand abrogated to the extent of such inconsistency. While in the course of our discussions and proceedings we have kept in view the provisions of existing Statute law, we have not had sufficient time to examine in detail the effect of this clause on the mass of existing legislation. We recommend that such an examination be undertaken before this clause is finally inserted in the constitution.

8. The Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee was of the opinion that the right of the citizen to have redress against the State in a court of law shall not be fettered by undue restrictions. That Sub-Committee was not able, however, to draft a suitable formula as the matter requires more investigation than was possible in the time at its disposal. It was also suggested during our deliberations that certain additional fundamental rights should be inserted in the constitution. We have not had the time to consider these matters; we shall do so in due course and incorporate any recommendations we may have to make on them in our next report.

9. The Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee and the Minorities Sub-Committee were agreed that the following should be included in the list of Fundamental Rights:

‘Every citizen not below 21 years of age shall have the right to vote at any election to the legislature of the Union and of any unit thereof, or, where the legislature is bicameral, to the lower chamber

of the legislature, subject to such disqualifications on the ground of mental incapacity, corrupt practice or crime as may be imposed, and subject to such qualifications relating to residence within the appropriate constituency, as may be required, by or under the law.

- (2) The law shall provide for free and secret voting and for periodical elections to the legislature.
- (3) The superintendence, direction and control of all elections to the legislature, whether of the Union or of a Unit, including the appointment of Election Tribunals, shall be vested in an Election Commission for the Union or the Unit, as the case may be, appointed, in all cases, in accordance with the law of the Union.¹

While agreeing in principle with this clause, we recommend that instead of being included in the list of fundamental rights, it should find a place in some other part of the constitution.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

VALLABHBHAI PATEL

Chairman

Advisory Committee on Minorities, Fundamental Rights, etc.

¹ Annexure not reproduced here.

16. Discussion on the Report of the Committee on Union Subjects

Extract from the Proceedings of the Constituent Assembly, 28 April 1947

Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. III, pp. 380–2.

Mr President: Presentation of the Report of the Committee appointed by the Resolution of the Constituent Assembly of the 25th January, 1947, to examine the scope of Union subjects.

Mr H.V. Kamath: Sir, is it only the presentation of the Report or is a motion being moved? There is no notice of a motion.

Mr President: If the Hon'ble Member will wait and hear, he will know what it is.

The Hon'ble Sir N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar (Madras: General): Sir, I come forward to perform a merely routine and prosaic duty of presenting the Report of the Committee on Union subjects. It is not intended that any motion on this Report should be placed before this House today. This Committee was appointed on the 25th January for the purpose of examining the scope and content of the subjects assigned to the Centre in the Statement of the Cabinet Mission of May 16th and to draw up lists of matters included in and interconnected with the subjects so assigned. The Committee started with strength of twelve and power was reserved to you, Sir, to nominate ten more, the intention being that some seats should be filled by nomination of representatives of the Muslim League if they came in, and others should be assigned to representatives of the Indian States. As it is, the Muslim League has not so far come in, and as Pandit Jawaharlal explained to you a little while ago, strenuous attempts were made to get the full quota of nominations for representatives of the Indian States being filled in, if possible. But it was not possible to do so. In the later stages of our deliberations, however, we have had the assistance of two distinguished representatives from Indian States.

Now, Sir, I said I was only performing this prosaic duty; I was not going to perform the function which my Hon'ble friend, Mr Kamath, would have liked me to perform today. Copies of this Report, I believe, have been circulated to Members. It is not, therefore, necessary that I should read the Report; and in connection with mere presentation of reports in a deliberative assembly of this kind it is not usual to make a speech on the contents of such a report except on an occasion such as the one mentioned by Mr Kamath, for instance, on a motion for taking the Report into consideration. That motion is not to be made today, nor is it intended by those to whom has been entrusted the task of steering the business of this Assembly. It is not their intention that such a motion should be placed before the House during the current Session. There are several reasons why this decision has been taken. In the first place, Sir, the subject is a very important one; it is a vital matter connected with the framing of the Constitution, and it is only desirable that this Report on so important a subject should be read through and studied carefully by Members of this House before it is taken into consideration. And then we have got to remember that the Committee had to work on the Cabinet Mission's Plan. That Plan contains some very unusual features, the unusualness really resulting from the desire to satisfy the wishes of the Muslim League if it ever decided to come in. The coming in of the Muslim League is not yet officially ruled out; there is still a possibility of their coming in, though the probability is perhaps very small. Should this possibility materialise it would be only just and reasonable that the debate on so important a subject, as the subjects and powers to be assigned to the Union centre, should be held in a House which contains a full representation of the Muslim League. Whether they will come in or not will be definitely known before the June-July Session of this Assembly. And that is one main reason why we are not taking up the discussion of this matter in this current Session.

Then, Sir, there are the Indian States—a number of representatives of Indian States have joined us today but there is a very large number still to come in. Those have not come in because they require time for going through the procedure prescribed for the purpose of choosing them and sending them to this Assembly. The Indian States have got a very vital interest in the matter which is covered by the Report of this Committee, and it is desirable that as full a representation of the Indian States as possible should be in the Assembly before we begin to discuss so important a matter. Thirdly, Sir, there is the question of the present political conversations. The decisions on those conversations are not available yet: they will be available in all probability before we meet again in the June-July Session. The decisions will be of the most important character, and I think the House will agree with me in thinking that those decisions will have very important repercussions on the plan of work which this Constituent Assembly will have to adopt in framing the Constitution for the country if that decision should, as it is feared, take the shape of anything like the division of India into two or more independent States it may become necessary for this Assembly to deviate from rigid conformity to the Cabinet Mission's Plan. It is unnecessary for me to say now in what directions this deviation might become necessary. The nature of those deviations must necessarily depend upon the political decisions that are taken but apart from such deviations the number of subjects that have to be assigned to the Centre, their scope and content, the definition of a field of concurrent jurisdiction between the Union and the Units, and the relations between the Union and the Units as regards the exercise of legislative and administrative powers, will all be matters which would require a fresh and thorough examination. This examination will so far as I can visualize have to be done in close collaboration between the Committee on Union Subjects and the two Committees which are proposed to be set up in the course of the

current Session—one for the purpose of determining the principles of the Union Constitution, and the other for determining the principles of a model provincial constitution. These three Committees will have to work in close collaboration, and it is necessary that before they enter into such collaboration, they must have before them the political decisions that will have been reached before them.

Now, Sir, taking all these facts into consideration, it is, I think, very necessary that the debate on the Report of the Committee on Union Subjects should be postponed beyond this Session, to the next Session, and therefore it is that I am not placing before you any motion for taking this Report into consideration today.

There is one matter about which I think I must ask the permission of the House to approve of what this Committee has done. In the original Resolution appointing this Committee, it was asked to submit its Report before the 15th of April. As a matter of fact, the Committee signed its Report on the 17th of April. I do hope, Sir, that the House will excuse this delay of two days.

There is another matter which I might mention. This Report should not be taken as the final Report of the Committee on Union Subjects. I have already placed before you considerations which will necessitate the matter being reviewed and overhauled by the same Committee in collaboration with other Committees. There are matters, for instance, connected with Indian States, which require perhaps more consideration than it was possible to give them during the time that this Committee met between its appointment and today. The representatives of the States who wish to give us the benefit of their views feel that there are some matters which require further investigation before they could finally commit themselves, and there are also other matters and certain questions connected with the subjects which have been listed in this Report about which greater consideration, it is considered by certain members of the Committee, would be necessary. And apart from that there is looming before us the political decision which will necessitate our overhauling the entire Report if it comes to that. Therefore, Sir, I request the permission of the House to let this Committee submit a further Report if it becomes necessary. With these words, I merely present the Report of the Committee to the House.

Mr President: The Report has been presented. I think the House will condone two days delay in signing it, and will also give permission to the Committee to submit another Report if it finds it necessary to do so.

This was unanimously agreed to.

Mr R.K. Sidhwa (CP and Berar: General): When the subsequent Report is presented, may I know whether this Report will also be open to discussion. We have not read even a single sentence of this Report which has been presented to the House.

Mr President: We are not entering into any discussion on this Report. The Hon'ble Member will read this Report, and we can then discuss it during the next Session.

We will meet at 8-30 tomorrow morning and we will go on until 12-30 when we will adjourn. Any Member who has any amendments to suggest to the Report of the Fundamental Rights Committee should do so before 5 o'clock this evening. The Report will be taken into consideration tomorrow. The House now stands adjourned until 8-30 a.m. tomorrow.

The Assembly then adjourned till half past Eight of the Clock, on Tuesday, the 29th April, 1947.



17. 'Let Us Go Ahead with Faith in Country': Rajen Babu's Call for Speedy Work on Constitution

Extract from a Report from *National Herald*, 29 April 1947.

NEW DELHI, April 28.—Dr Rajendra Prasad, President of the Constituent Assembly, addressing the house, which met this morning, indicated that it must be prepared not only for a division of India but a division of some provinces and for this the Assembly may have to draw up a constitution based on such a division.

Dr Rajendra Prasad said: 'Whatever the nature of the constitution that may have to be drafted, whether for one undivided India or only for parts of it, we shall see to it that it gives satisfaction to all coming under its jurisdiction.'

Expressing the hope that the Assembly would proceed with all expedition in view of HMG's declared intention to transfer power to Indians by June, 1948, Dr Rajendra Prasad said that it had been tentatively decided to finalise the Constitution by the end of October....

18. 'Charter of Equality in New Constitution: Untouchability to Be Abolished'

Extract from a Report from *The Hindustan Times*, 30 April 1947.

NEW DELHI, Tuesday.—'Untouchability in any form is abolished and the imposition of any disability on that account shall be an offence... There shall be no discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex.'

These are among the Fundamental Rights which the Constituent Assembly adopted today unanimously, thus proclaiming to the world that the free State it wishes to construct shall be the most democratic.

Another proof of this resolve was given in the evening when the Congress Party at a meeting in the Constitution House resolved to omit various provisos governing the Fundamental Rights relating to the freedom of speech, of association and of the Press. The meeting considered it enough to state that the exercise of various freedoms shall be subject to the requirement of morality and public order.

The Assembly dealt with the report of the Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee in a businesslike way and passed five clauses during its four-hour sitting in the day. The discussion was lively and Sardar Patel and Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer effectively answered most of the criticism voiced by movers of amendments....

Then occurred a battle of legal wits on the definition of citizenship. It started on an innocent-looking question put by Mr B. Das as to whether the definition that every person born in the Union shall be a citizen of the Union was not too liberal to foreigners. The question assumed significance because the President, Dr Rajendra Prasad, declared that it required an answer, Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer, who is the brain behind the sub-committee's report, gave a lucid exposition of the issues involved.

The political argument was provided by Sardar Patel, who said that the world was watching them and they must not bring in racial tinge while they were fighting against racial discrimination in South Africa and elsewhere. The House laughed when he clinched the issue by asking: 'How many foreign women are coming here to give birth to children to acquire Indian citizenship?' The President expressed himself as unconvinced and since some members had suggested

postponement of the clause the general sense of the House favoured postponement. The President will form a committee of eminent lawyers to re-examine the definition.

When the House debated the clause stating that there shall be no discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex, Mr Lahiri (Communist) proposed that there shall be no discrimination on grounds of political creed. Sardar Patel reacted sharply to this plea by remarking: 'There may be some political creeds which may be highly objectionable and may deserve not discrimination but suppression.' The amendment was rejected, not even the mover saying 'aye'.

Mr Rohini Kumar Chaudhry suffered a similar rebuff when he suggested that discrimination on grounds of dress should be banned. His grievance was that some European hotels were still not admitting people wearing Indian dress. 'They are all quitting,' said Sardar Patel, 'Some people are still haunted by ideas of slavery.'

19. Demand for Retention of Anglo-Indian Schools and Reservation in Civil Services

Extracts from the Memorandum on the Anglo-Indian Community by Frank Anthony, President, All India Anglo-Indian Association, April 1947

B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), *Framing of India's Constitution*, Vol. II, pp. 343–7.

Education and Instruction in Our Mother-Tongue

We place the greatest emphasis on a specific clause in the Constitution somewhat similar to section 83 in the Government of India Act of 1935. The position of the Anglo-Indian community, *vis-à-vis* its educational facilities, is different from that of any other community in India. It is essential that Anglo-Indian schools should continue as a distinct entity within the educational system of the country.

The community claims the retention, and adequate provision for the maintenance, of its schools by the State as a fundamental right, the right of a minority to preserve its religion, its culture, its language and its way of life. The Christian religion of the Anglo-Indian, the English language as his mother-tongue, the Anglo-Indian culture and way of life are assumed. These are characteristics which are inherent in the religion, descent and traditions of the community. If the Anglo-Indian community is to preserve its cultural heritage, such preservation is inseparable from the retention and continuance of the distinct identity of Anglo-Indian schools. This is the universal and ardent desire of the community—a desire common to and claimed by every minority seeking to preserve its religion, its culture, its language and its way of life. The community places the greatest importance upon a specific clause being introduced in the new Constitution whereby educational grants for the benefit of the community shall continue to remain a statutory obligation on Provincial Governments. It is, however, claimed that the basis on which grants are assessed and the terms of the present section require suitable amendment. Experience of the actual working of the section indicates the need for ensuring that the educational grants made for the benefit of the community be adequate to maintain the present standards of its schools and provide for further development. Under conditions which obtain at present the grants are insufficient for both purposes. Under the terms of section 83 of the Government of India Act of 1935, Provincial Governments are required to make annual grants for the benefit of the Anglo-Indian community, 'not less in amount than the average of the grants made for its benefit in the 10 financial years ending on the 31st March, 1933'.

This assessment bears little or no relation to the present-day expenditure of Anglo-Indian schools. With the general rise of the cost of living, in common with other schools, the cost of maintaining Anglo-Indian schools has risen considerably during the past decade. There has been an increase of 42 per cent in the total expenditure. It is essential that Government should recognize and provide for this increase in the cost of maintenance. Unfortunately, no cognizance has been taken of this increase. Despite the heavy rise in total expenditure, the grants to our schools have remained static. The proportion of the cost met by Government has consequently declined. Further, while section 83 provides for a reduction of the grants to Anglo-Indian education *pro rata* to any reduction in the total grant to education made by the Provincial Government, it makes no provision for *pro rata* increase. Under these terms, the development of its schools and the community's participation in the benefits accruing in the progress and reform of education become impossible.

In the application of the statute by the majority of Provincial Governments what was meant to be a statutory minimum has tended to become a statutory maximum. It is generally argued that as the per capita expenditure by the State on Anglo-Indian education is higher than that prevailing for other communities, no increase in the grants is justifiable. The plea is here made for a sympathetic approach to the whole question. This approach can be helped by consideration of the following facts:

- (1) The special need of the Anglo-Indian community in the matter of its education has been recognized repeatedly. It was in the pursuance of this recognition by the Irwin Committee, which consisted of distinguished Indians such as the Hon'ble Dr Jayakar and Sir Mohd Iqbal, that special grants-in-aid for Anglo-Indian education were provided under section 83 of the Government of India Act of 1935.
- (2) The Anglo-Indian community is, no less than other communities, an Indian community, rooted in Indian soil. In this connection we would draw attention to section 93 of the Canadian Constitution by which a seemingly insuperable difficulty between Roman Catholics and Protestants was overcome by offering generous terms in the matter of education to denominational schools.
- (3) Higher expenditure on Anglo-Indian education rises from certain inevitable facts such as:
 - (a) The natural standard of living of the community.
 - (b) The fact that half the number of Anglo-Indian schools are boarding establishments and the cost to Government per pupil includes boarding charges which are a non-existent or negligible item in the case of other communities.
 - (c) The admittedly higher standards, particularly as to training and discipline, obtaining in these schools.
- (4) While Government meets almost cent per cent the expenditure of schools for other communities, Anglo-Indian parents meet 50 per cent of the expenditure by payment of fees. The average annual cost per child to the Anglo-Indian parent in 1944-45 was Rs 160 whereas that to the parent in a non-Anglo-Indian school was only Rs 5.
- (5) Although the Government grant may amount, per capita, to much more than what is granted to other communities, yet the absolute amount is comparatively small.
- (6) The cost to Government per pupil as envisaged in the Sargent Scheme will be Rs 32 at the primary stage, Rs 55 at the middle school stage and Rs 109 at the high school stage. In 1944-45 the average cost to Government per Anglo-Indian pupil was Rs 71.

This shows that the cost of Anglo-Indian education is not more on an average than that envisaged by the Sargent Scheme for pupils of other communities.

- (7) A point to be remembered is that while these grants have been made to Anglo-Indian schools, most of the schools admit up to 40 per cent of pupils from other communities which means that, in fact, these grants are expended also on the education of a large number of pupils of other communities, whether Hindu, Muslim or Sikh.
- (8) While Municipal and District authorities maintain schools for other communities, at considerable cost, no such schools are provided for Anglo-Indians.
- (9) These schools represent a real national asset. A large percentage of members of other communities also attend these schools. The standard of education envisaged by the Sargent Scheme, and which is likely to take 30 or 40 years to materialize already obtains in Anglo-Indian schools. In asking for the retention of a clause similar to the provision in the Government of India Act, we wish certain aspects to be emphasized. While Government grants to other communities have steadily increased by about 29 per cent, since 1926–27, Government grants to Anglo-Indian schools have not only not increased at all but decreased. The provision in the Government of India Act which set out a minimum has, in practice, been interpreted by a majority of the Provincial Governments as prescribing a statutory maximum. In the result, the Anglo-Indian parent, as mentioned above, bears 50 per cent of the cost of education of the child. Comparatively, the Anglo-Indian parent bears a burden for the education of his child such as that not borne by parents of children of other communities. It is very necessary that the future Governments should consider these aspects and that the grants should be so increased to these schools as to lift an increasingly intolerable burden from the shoulders of Anglo-Indian parents.

Finally, I wish to reiterate that the mother-tongue of the community is English, and, because of this, is as much an Indian language as the mother-tongue of any other Indian community. I appreciate the fact that national self-respect will require that increasing importance be given to the main Indian languages. Our schools have recognized the need for the mastery of one of the main languages but the principle of cultural autonomy gives us the right to expect the continuance of English as the medium of instruction in our schools. We would also draw attention to the unnecessary hardship that will be caused to minorities, whose mother-tongue is not Hindi or Urdu, by precipitate measures as to the language media.

* * *

The Services

We appreciate the fact that the ideal condition would be to do away with all communal considerations for the purposes of recruitment to the services. But under present communal conditions, this must remain, at least for some time, unattainable. The present principle, to use the words of Appadorai must be that 'efficiency of the public services depends not merely upon the qualifications of the entrants thereto but upon the social harmony in the body politic served by them'. In order to maintain the social harmony we feel that communal representation is essential, subject of course to salutary safeguards which require adequate qualifications. Under this section we would ask for a special clause in the Constitution safeguarding our percentages of employment in the Railways, Posts and Telegraphs, and Customs Services. This clause can be based on section 252 of the Government of India Act, 1935, by which the class and character

of the posts, hitherto held by members of the Anglo-Indian community, are safeguarded. We ask for this clause in the Constitution for the following reasons:

- (a) The community has, as already mentioned, helped largely in the founding and developing of these important services.
- (b) It is unfair to calculate these percentages on a flat numerical ratio. The community is cent per cent literate. Further, the whole community studies up to at least the Middle School stage. This is certainly not the case with practically all the other communities. Finally, over a period of many decades, the community has developed special aptitudes for these services. On the basis, therefore, of the number of persons qualified and willing to enter these services, our percentages are not only not disproportionate but perhaps comparatively low.
- (c) The economy of the community has, as the result of circumstances beyond its control, been based almost entirely on Government service. A sudden and violent dislocation by depriving the community abruptly of these three major avenues, would be to deal it an economic death-blow. This we feel could never be the deliberate intention of any section of our fellow countrymen towards us. If necessary, this safeguard clause can be made operative for a limited period of 30 years, so as to give the community an opportunity to divert itself into other avenues of employment.
- (d) The total number of posts held by the community in these three departments, approximates to 17,000. This represents a microscopic proportion of the hundreds of thousands of other Government's posts left untouched by the community.

20. Discussion on the Interim Report of the Committee on Fundamental Rights

Extracts from Proceedings of the Constituent Assembly, 1 and 2 May 1947
Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. III, pp. 485–522.

CLAUSE 13—RIGHTS RELATING TO RELIGION

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: Sir, I move the adoption of clause 13, namely,

'All persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience, and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion, subject to public order, morality or health, and to the other provisions of this Part.

Explanation 1—The wearing and carrying of *kirpans* shall be deemed to be included in the profession of the Sikh religion.

Explanation 2—The above rights shall not include any economic, financial, political or other secular activities that may be associated with religious practice.

Explanation 3—The freedom of religious practice guaranteed in this clause shall not debar the State from enacting laws for the purpose of social welfare and reform.'

I see that there are a number of amendments on the Order Paper. I shall speak on them when they are moved and, if there is any that could be accepted, I shall accept.

Mr K.M. Munshi: Sir, I move an amendment to the effect that, after the last Explanation, the following words be added:

‘and for throwing open Hindu religious institutions of a public character to any class or section of Hindus.’

After the Explanation above was drafted it was thought that the practice of religion referred to should not be of such a character as will interfere with the right of the Legislature to legislate on social questions. The question arose with regard to the throwing open of all temples to all classes of Hindus, whether it would be religious practice. In order to prevent any such construction of clause, it was decided that the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions shall not be held to contravene the practice of Hindu religion.

Mr President: I shall now call upon Members who have given notice of amendments to this clause, to move them... (after a *pause*)... As I find that there is no amendment moved to the clause I shall put it to the vote of the House.

Mr H.J. Khandekar (CP and Berar): Sir, in case Mr Munshi’s amendment to this clause is accepted, it may be necessary to have a definition for ‘places of public worship’. Unless this is done it may be difficult for people to know which is a place of public worship. Even where admission to people of all classes is given, depressed classes are not allowed. Even when there is a written record that a certain temple is open to worship by depressed classes, the *pujaris* obstruct and say that that temple is a private one and, therefore, not open to depressed classes. So, Sir, if there is definition of ‘places of public worship’ there will be no difficulty. I suggest, therefore, that there should be a definition for ‘places of public worship’.

Mr President: May I know in which clause that expression occurs?

Mr H.J. Khandekar: Explanation 3.

Mr President: I do not find this expression there.

There is no mention of any place of public worship there.

Mr H.J. Khandekar: I want a definition for ‘religious institutions of a public character’.

Mr President: Mr Khandekar wants some explanation of the term ‘religious institutions of a public character’ so that it may be clear what religious institutions are referred to.

Shri L. Krishnaswami Bharathi: Sir, the clause reads: ‘other provisions of this Chapter’. It should read ‘other provisions of this Part’.

The Hon’ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: The word ‘Chapter’ has been substituted by the word ‘Part’.

I accept Mr Munshi’s amendment and I congratulate the House on agreeing to pass this very controversial matter which has taken several days in the Committees and gone through several Committees. There might be differences of opinion, but on the whole we have tried our best to accommodate all sections of the people. I move that this clause as amended be passed.

Mr President: I am putting to the vote first the amendment to Explanation No. 3. The amendment is:

‘That the words “and for throwing open Hindu religious institutions of a public character to any class or section of Hindus” be added at the end of Explanation No. 3’.

The amendment was adopted.

Mr President: Now I put the clause as amended to the House.

Clause 13, as amended, was adopted.

Mr President: Now we go to clause 14

CLAUSE 14.

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: Now I move clause 14.

‘Every religious denomination shall have the right to manage its own affairs in matter of religion and, subject to the general law, to own, acquire and administer property movable and immovable, and to establish and maintain institutions for religious or charitable purposes.’

There is a little addition by way of an amendment which Mr Munshi will move. I move this clause for the acceptance of the House.

Mr K.M. Munshi: Sir, I move an amendment that in clause 14 the words ‘or a section thereof’ be added between the word ‘denomination’ and the word ‘shall’. It was felt that the use of the term ‘religious denomination’ may prevent a section of a denomination from being protected.

Sri K. Santhanam: What is meant by ‘general law’?

Mr K.M. Munshi: There is a general law of the country as apart from any special legislation. When the word ‘law’ is used, it means the law of either the Unit or the Union according to the power which is being exercised. If it is a Union subject, it is Union law. If it is a Unit subject, it is Unit law.

Mr President: Has the word ‘general’ any special significance here, Law is law.

Mr K.M. Munshi: The intention was that any specific legislation was to be excluded. There are certain legislations specifically intended for certain classes of people. If the desire of the House is that it should be ‘law’, I have no objection.

Some Hon'ble Members: ‘...subject to “law”.’

Mr President: Mr Santhanam, there is an amendment to be moved by you, amendment No. 63.

Sri K. Santhanam: No, Sir. I am not moving it.

Mr President: Mr Rajagopalachariar, you have an amendment.

The Hon'ble Sri C. Rajagopalachariar: No, Sir. I am not moving it.

Mr President: The clause and the amendment are now open for discussion.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: I oppose the omission of the word ‘general’ which is opposed to special or local laws which are defined in the Indian Penal Code as relating to a particular subject or a particular part of British India. There ought to be no restriction on the acquisition of rights and property by any religious institution under any special law. The same definition relating to special and local laws will be found in the General Clauses Act also. I, therefore, want the retention of the word ‘general’. I think the framers of the clause were right in including it.

Diwan Bahadur Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar: The General Clauses Act and the Penal Code will not apply to the interpretation of our Constitution. We must have an interpretation clause in our Constitution when the Constitution is finally framed.

Mr H.V. Kamath: I could not hear a word of what Sir Alladi said.

Mr President: Sir Alladi's view was that the General Clauses Act and the Penal Code will not apply to our Constitution and, therefore, we need not attach any importance to them.

Mr D.N. Datta (Bengal: General): If the words 'existing Indian law' are there, the General Clauses Act will apply.

Mr President: You are at liberty to differ from Sir Alladi.

The Hon'ble Sri C. Rajagopalachariar: Apart from the question of how words should be interpreted, it is very necessary that this special right that we are giving to religious denominations should be subject to all the laws that will be enacted and, therefore, the expression should be only 'law' and not any particular portion of the law.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: We are trying to get these on the statute book. What is the meaning of taking these technical objections?

Mr President: As a matter of fact, the point has been discussed, and if there is anything else, then the Drafting Committee will attend to them.

Now I will put the various amendments. The first amendment I will put is that the words 'or a section thereof' be added between 'denomination' and 'shall'. That part of the clause will read as follows:

'Every religious denomination or a section thereof shall have the right to manage its own affairs...'

and so on.

The amendment was adopted.

Mr President: The next amendment is that the words 'the general' be omitted.

The amendment was adopted.

Mr President: The clause as amended will read:

'Every religious denomination or a section thereof shall have the right to manage its own affairs in matters of religion and, subject to law, to own, acquire and administer property movable and immovable, and to establish and maintain institutions for religious or charitable purposes.'

I put the clause, as amended, to the House.

Clause 14, as amended, was adopted. ...

CLAUSE 17

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: Sir, I move Clause 17.

'Conversion from one religion to another brought about by coercion or undue influence shall not be recognised by law.'

Mr K.M. Munshi: Sir, I beg to move the following amendment:

'That for clause 17 substitute the following clause:

“Any conversion from one religion to another of any person brought about by fraud, coercion or undue influence or of a minor under the age of 18 shall not be recognised by law”.

The additions that are made to the clause as it is originally moved are there. First of all, the word ‘fraud’ is added to the words, ‘coercion and undue influence’. The second matter is with regard to the conversion of a minor. As a matter of fact, it was proposed by one of the other Committees in some form or other, and it is the general feeling that this clause should be restored in this form,—any conversion of a minor under the age of 18 shall not be recognized by law. The only effect of non-recognition by law would mean that even though a person is converted by fraud or coercion or undue influence or be converted during his minority he will still in law be deemed to continue to belong to the old religion and his legal rights will remain unaffected by reason of his conversion. The idea behind this proposal is that very often, if there are conversions by fraud or undue influence or during minority, certain changes in the legal status take place, certain rights are lost. This will have only this effect that the rights will remain exactly the same as at the moment a person was converted by fraud or coercion or undue influence and in the case of a minor at the moment of conversion.

If Hon’ble Members desire I will read the whole clause. The whole clause is put in this form.

‘Any conversion from one religion to another of any person brought about by fraud, coercion or undue influence or of a minor under the age of 18 shall not be recognised by law.’

Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhury (Assam: General): May I ask you to explain as to what is meant by the words ‘undue influence’? Is it used in the sense laid down in the Contract Act or in the general sense?

Mr K.M. Munshi: It is difficult for me to say, but I am sure ‘fraud’ is fraud all the world over and in all systems of jurisprudence. There is no difference between the two words coercion and undue influence as understood in India and in other countries. There may be little shades of difference but the free India will form its definitions and it may not be different from the Oxford dictionary meaning so far as I can see.

Shri Phool Singh (United Provinces: General): In view of the amendment moved by Mr Munshi, my amendment will not fit in. But I suggest, Sir, that conversion by coercion should be made an offence. I would suggest he might move an amendment to this effect.

The Hon’ble Mr Jagjivan Ram: I am not moving my amendment (No. 72 of the Supplementary List II).

Mr President: Amendment No. 73 of the Supplementary List II.

Mr R.K. Sidhwa: This is a new clause. It may be taken up later.

Mr F.R. Anthony (Bengal: General): Mr President, my amendment, is with specific reference to Mr Munshi’s amendment, ‘or of a minor under the age of 18’. To this part of the clause I want to add these words: ‘except when the parents or surviving parents have been converted and the child does not choose to adhere to its original faith’. This was more or less the form in which the particular clause was accepted by the Minorities Sub-Committee. We discussed it at length and it was felt that in the form, I have sought to re-introduce, it would best serve the interests that we were considering there.

I agree that conversion under undue influence, conversion by coercion or conversion by fraud should not be recognized by law. I am only interested in this question, Sir, on principle. My community does not propagate. We do not convert, nor are we converted. But I do appreciate how deeply, how passionately millions of Christians feel on this right to propagate their religion. I want to congratulate the major party for having, in spite of its contentious character, retained the words 'right to practise and propagate their religion'. Having done that, I say that after giving with one hand this principal fundamental right, a right which is regarded as perhaps the most fundamental of Christian rights, do not take it away by this proviso, 'or of a minor under the age of 18'. I say that if you have this particular provision, or if you place an absolute embargo on the conversion of a minor, you will place an embargo absolutely on the right of conversion. You will virtually take away the right to convert. Because, what will happen? Not a single adult who is a parent, however deeply he may feel, however deeply he may be convinced, will ever adopt Christianity, because, by this clause you will be cutting off that parent from his children. By this clause you will say, although the parents may be converted to Christianity, the children shall not be brought up by these parents in the faith of the parents. You will be cutting at the root of family life. I say it is contrary to the ordinary concepts of natural law and justice. You may have your prejudices against conversion; you may have your prejudices against propagation. But once having allowed it, I plead with you not to cut at the root of family life. This is a right which is conceded in every part of the world, the right of parents to bring up their children in the faith that the parents want them to pursue. You have your safeguards. You have provided that conversion by undue influence, conversion by fraud, conversion by coercion shall not be recognized by law. I have gone further, and unlike the position in other parts of the world, I have even given discretion to the child provided it has attained the age of discretion, to adhere to its original faith. The wording is 'and the child does not choose to adhere to its original faith'. If both the parents are converted and if they want their children to be brought up as Christians, if these children have reached the age of discretion and say that in spite of the conversion of their parents, they do not want to be brought up as Christians, under the restriction which I have introduced, they will not be brought up in the Christian faith.

I have also added the word 'surviving parent', for this reason, I say that if you restrict it to both the parents,—what will happen? If a widow, let us assume, adopts Christianity, do you mean to say that if she wants to bring up her children in the Christian faith, and if those children themselves want to be brought up in the Christian faith, you are placing an embargo on this? If you do not use the word 'surviving parents', if the father who happens to be a widower adopts the Christian faith, and the children wish to be brought up as Christians, it may be said that since both the parents are not alive, the father cannot bring up the children in his faith. He will automatically be cut off from his children.

I realize how deeply certain sections of this House feel on this question of conversion. But I do ask you, having once conceded the right to propagate, to concede this in consonance with the principles of family law and in consonance with the principles of natural law and justice.

Mr P.R. Thakur: Sir, I am a member of the Depressed Classes. This clause of the Fundamental Rights is very important from the standpoint of my community. You know well, Sir, that the victims of these religious conversions are ordinarily from the Depressed Classes. The preachers of other religions approach these classes of people, take advantage of their ignorance, extend all sorts of temptations and ultimately convert them. I want to know from Mr Munshi whether

'fraud' covers all these things. If it does not cover, I should ask Mr Munshi to re-draft this clause so that fraud of this nature might not be practised on these depressed classes. I should certainly call these 'fraud'.

The Hon'ble Rev J.J.M. Nichols-Roy (Assam: General): Mr President, Sir, it appears to me that the clause as it came out of the Advisory Committee is sufficient and should not be amended at all. The amendment seeks to prevent a minor, who is of twelve years of age, or thirteen years of age, up to eighteen years of age from exercising his own conscience. The age limit may be quite right in law. But to think that a youth under the age of eighteen does not have a conscience before God and, therefore, he cannot express his belief is wrong. That side of the question must be appropriately considered. There is a spiritual side in conversion which ought to be taken notice of by this House. Conversion does not mean only that a man changes his form of religion from one religion to another, or adopts a different name of religion, such as, a Hindu becomes a Christian. But there is the spiritual aspects of conversion, that is, the connection of the soul of man with God, which must not be overlooked by this House. I know there are those who change their religion being influenced by material considerations, but there are others who are converted being under the influence of spiritual power. When a boy feels that he is called by God to adopt a different faith, no law should prevent him from doing that. The consciences of those youths who want to change their religion and adopt another religion from a spiritual standpoint should not be prevented from allowing these youths to exercise their right to change their legal status and change their religion. We know, Sir, in the history of Christianity, there have been youths, and I know personally, there have been many youths, who have been converted to Christianity, who are ready to die for their conviction and who are ready to lose everything. I myself was converted when I was about fifteen years old when I heard the voice of God calling me. I was ready to lose anything on earth. I was ready to suffer death even. I did not care for anything save to obey and follow the voice of God in my soul. Why should a youth who has such a call of God be prevented by law from changing his religion and calling himself by another name when he feels before God that he is influenced by the Spirit of God to do that and is ready even to sacrifice his life for that. This part of the amendment about minors is absolutely wrong when we consider it from the spiritual standpoint. From the standpoint of conscience I consider that it is altogether wrong not to allow a youth from the age of twelve to eighteen to exercise his own conscience before God. It will oppress the consciences of the youths who want to exercise their religious faiths before God. Therefore, I am against this amendment as it is. The clause should be left as it was before. The legal and other aspects have been discussed by Mr Anthony regarding the conversion of the children of the converted parents. Certain minors should be allowed to follow their own conviction if they have any, and should not be forced to do anything against their own conviction. Why should the law not allow them if they themselves do not care for their former legal status? Why should they be prevented from changing their religion? Why should their consciences be oppressed? That is a very important point, Sir, to be considered by this House. This freedom I consider to be a Fundamental Right of the Youths. No law should be made which will work against good spiritual forces. India, especially, is a country of religions, a country where there is religious freedom. If this amendment is carried in this House, it will only mean that in making a law to prevent the evil forces our minds lose sight of the real religious freedom which the youths of this land ought to have. Therefore, I am against this very principle of forcing the youths by not allowing them to exercise their religious conviction according to

their consciences. I would suggest, Sir, that if in the amendment moved by Mr Anthony the words 'or save when the minor himself wants to change his religion' are included, then I do not object to this amendment. I am against any conversion by undue influence or by fraud or coercion. When we make a law against all these evils we should be careful to see that that law does not oppress the consciences of the youths who also need freedom.

The Hon'ble Shri Purushottamdas Tandon (United Provinces: General): Mr President, I am greatly surprised at the speeches delivered here by our Christian brethren. Some of them have said that in this Assembly we have admitted the right of every one to propagate his religion and to convert from one religion to another. We Congressmen deem it very improper to convert from one to another religion or to take part in such activities and we are not in favour of this. In our opinion it is absolutely futile to be keen on converting others to one's faith. But it is only at the request of some persons, whom we want to keep with us in our national endeavour that we accepted this. Now it is said that they have a right to convert young children to their faith. What is this? Really this surprises me very much. You can convert a child below eighteen by convincing and persuading him but he is a child of immature sense and legally and morally speaking this conversion can never be considered valid. If a boy of eighteen executes a transfer deed in favour of a man for his hut worth only Rs 100, the transaction is considered unlawful. But our brethren come forward and say that the boy has enough sense to change his religion. That the value of religion is even less than that of a hut worth one hundred rupees. It is proper that a boy should be allowed to formally change his religion only when he attains maturity.

One of my brethren has said that we are taking away with the left hand what we gave the Christians with our right hand. Had we not given them the right to convert the young ones along with the conversion of their parents they would have been justified in their statement. What we gave them with our right hand is that they have a right to convert others by an appeal to reason and after honestly changing their views and outlook. The three words, 'coercion', 'fraud' and 'undue influence' are included as provisos and are meant to cover the cases of adult converts. These words are not applicable to converts of immature age. Their conversion is coercion and undue influence under all circumstances. How can the young ones change their religion? They have not the sense to understand the teachings of your scriptures. If they change their religion it is only under some influence and this influence is not fair. If a Christian keeps a young Hindu boy with him and treats him kindly the boy may like to live with him. We are not preventing this. But the boy can change his religion, legally only on attaining maturity. If parents are converted why should it be necessary that their children should also change their religion? If they are under the influence of their parents they can change their religion on maturity. This is my submission.

With your permission, Mr President, I would like to address a few words in English that such of my friends who do not know Hindi may follow me.

Sir, I am astonished at the manner in which some Christian friends have advanced the claim to convert minors. We have agreed to the right of conversion. Generally, we, Congressmen do not think it at all right—I say so frankly—that people should strenuously go about trying to convert peoples of other faith into their own, but we want to carry our Christian friends with us—friends who feel that they should have the right to make conversions—and we have agreed on their insistence to retain this formula about 'propagation'. They know that we are opposed to it, yet we have agreed.

Mr C.E. Gibbon (CP and Berar: General): It is quite wrong.

The Hon'ble Shri Purushottamdas Tandon: I am speaking, Sir, as a Congressman. I say that the majority of Congressmen do not like this process of making converts (*interruption*), but in order to carry our Christian friends with us...

Mr C.E. Gibbon: On a point of order, Sir.

The Hon'ble Shri Purushottamdas Tandon: There can be no point of order. There may be a point of opinion.

Mr C.E. Gibbon: I do not think, Sir, that the Speaker is competent to speak for all Congressmen.

Some Hon'ble Members: Why not?

Mr President: That is no point of order.

Shri Balkrishna Sharma (United Provinces: General): The Speaker has every right to speak on behalf of most of the Congressmen. He is most certainly entitled to do so.

The Hon'ble Shri Purushottamdas Tandon: I know Congressmen more than my friend over there. I know their feelings more intimately than probably he has ever had an opportunity of doing, and I know that most Congressmen are opposed to this idea of 'propagation'. But we agreed to keep the word 'propagate' out of regard for our Christian friends. But now to ask us to agree to minors also being converted is, I think, Sir, going too far. It is possible that parents having a number of children are converted into some other faith but why should it be necessary that all these children who do not understand religion should be treated as converts? I submit it is not at all necessary. The law of guardianship will see about it. Guardians can be appointed to look after these children, and when they grow up, if they feel that Christianity is a form of religion which appeals to their minds they will be at liberty to embrace it. That much to my Christian friends.

I understand, Sir, that it is possible that difficulties may be raised by some lawyers. What is the legal difficulty about this matter? The ordinary law of guardianship will see about this. When we say that minors cannot be converted, that implies that when parents go to another faith and they have a number of children to look after, the law of the country will take care of those children. You can always enact a law of guardianship and you can, if necessary, add to the laws which at present exist on the subject so that in such cases the minors should be taken care of. I do not, Sir, therefore, see that there is any legal difficulty in the way of the amendment which Mr Munshi has proposed being accepted. I heartily support Mr Munshi's amendment....

Mr President: I have got a list of a number of names of members who wish to speak on this amendment. I take it that my eye catches members in the order in which I have received the requests. So, I call upon Shri Algu Rai Shastri.

Shri Algu Rai Shastri (UP: General): Mr President, I stand here to support the amendment moved by Mr Munshi. I believe that by accepting the amendment we shall be doing justice to those minors who have perforce to enter the fold of the religion which their parents embrace out of their greed. This practice is like the one prevailing in the transactions of transfer of land and which is that 'trees go with the land'. It is on some such basis that the minor children who do not understand what change of religion or coercion or religious practices mean, have to leave their old faith along with their parents. This evil practice has a very bad effect, on the

strength of our population. It is proper for us that we, who are framing the charts of Fundamental Rights, should safeguard their interests and save them from such automatic conversion. The dynamic conditions of our society make it more important than ever that we should incorporate such a provision in our Constitution as will prevent such practices. Such minors on attaining majority often regret that they were made to change their religion improperly. Wherever the Europeans or the white races of Europe, who rule practically over the whole world, have gone, they have, as Missionaries. A study of the 'Prosperous India' by Digby shows that 'cross was followed by the sword'. The missionary was followed by the batons, the swords and the guns. It was in this way that they employed coercion for spreading their religions and for extending their Empire. At the same time, they put economic and political pressure on the indigenous tribes and consolidated the foundations of their dominion. We want such an amendment in this clause of Fundamental Rights that a person who wants to change his religion should be able to do so only after he is convinced through cool deliberation that the new religion is more satisfactory to him than the old one. For example it is only when I am convinced that Sikhism is preferable to Hinduism, that I should be able to change my religion. This right I believe we have. But no one should change religion out of greed and temptation. When the followers of one religion employ, sword and guns to attack a family consisting of a few members, the latter have no option but to accept the religion of the aggressors in order to save their lives. Such a conversion should be considered void and ineffective because it has been brought about through coercion and undue influence. In view of such conditions which exist today, conversion brought about through temptation and allurements is, in fact, not a conversion in the real sense of the term. I have a personal experience extending over a period of 24 years as to how the elders of the family are induced through prospects of financial gain to change their religion and also with them the children are taken over to the fold of the new religion. It appears as if some are taking the land physically in his possession and the helpless trees go with it to the new master.

One particular part of the country has been declared as an 'Excluded Area' so that a particular sect alone may carry on its propaganda therein. Another area has been reserved for the 'Criminal tribes'. Similarly, other areas have also been reserved wherein missionaries alone can carry on their activities. In Chattisgarh and other similar forest areas there are tribes which follow primitive faiths. There the Hindu missionaries cannot carry on their activities. These are called 'Excluded and partially Excluded Areas', and no religious propaganda can be carried on in these areas except by the missionaries. This was the baneful policy of the Government. We should now be delivered from this policy of religious discrimination. In his book 'Census of India—1930' Dewton writes that the Christian population of Assam has increased 300 times and attributes this increase to certain evils in Hindu Society. It is these evils which gave other missionaries opportunities to make conversions. In his book 'Census of India—1911' Mr S. Kamath has said that the missionaries of one particular religion are reducing the numbers of another by exploiting the evils of that group. They convert some influential persons by inducement and persuasion. The bitterness of the present is due to such activities. I am conversant with what Christian missions have done for the backward classes and I have also seen their work among such classes of people. I bow to them with respect for the way in which they (missionaries) have done their work. How gracious it would have been had they done it only for social service. I found that the dispute, if and when it occurs, between members of such castes as the sweepers or the *chamars* on the one side and the land-lords or some other influential persons on the other have been exploited to create bitterness between them. No effort

has been made to effect a compromise. This crooked policy has been adopted to bring about the conversion of the former. Similarly, people of other faiths have intensified and exploited our differences in order to increase their own numbers. The consequence is that the grown-up people in such castes as *Bhangies* and *chamars* are converted, and with them their children also go into the fold of the new religion. They should be affectionately asked to live as brothers. This is what has been taught by prophets, angels and leaders. But this is not being practised today. We are in search of opportunities to indulge in underhand dealings. We go to people and tell them 'you are in darkness; this is not the way for your salvation'. Thus every body can realize how all possible unfair means have been adopted to trample the majority community under feet. It is in this way that the Foreign bureaucracy has been working here, and has been creating vested interests in order to maintain its political strangle-hold over the people. If we cannot remove this foundation whom are we going to give the Fundamental Rights? To these minors who are in the lap of their parents? If we permit minors to be transferred like trees on land with the newly embraced religion of their parents, we would be doing an injustice. Many fallacious arguments are offered to permit this. We must not be misled by these. We know that our failure to stop conversion under coercion would result in grave injustice. I have a right to change my religion. I believe in God. If I realize tomorrow that God is a farce and an aberration of human mind then I can become an atheist. If I think that the Hindu faith is false, I, with my grey hair, my fallen teeth and ripe age, and my mature discretion can change my religion. But if my minor child repeats what I say, are you going to allow him also a right to change his religion (at that age)? Revered Purushottam Das Tandon has said in a very appealing manner that if a child transfers his immovable property worth Rs 100 the transaction is void. How unjust it is that if a minor changes his religion when his parents do so, his act is not void? It has an adverse effect on innocent children. This attempt to increase population has increased religious bitterness. The communal proportion has been changed so that the British bureaucracy may retain its hold by a variation in the numbers of the different communities. I am saying all these things deliberately but I am not attacking any one community in particular. The sole interest of the government in the illusory web of the census lies in seeing a balance in the population of the communities so that these may continue to quarrel among themselves and thereby strengthen its own rule. This amendment of Mr Munshi is directed against such motives. Nothing can be better than that, and, therefore, I support it.

In my opinion this majority community should not oppress the minority. We respect and honour all and we give an opportunity to every body to propagate his religion. Those who agree with you may be converted. But convert only those who can be legitimately converted. Improper conversions would not be right. You tempt the innocent little ones whom you take in your lap, by a suit of clothes, a piece of bread and a little toy and thus you ruin their lives. Later, they repent that they did not get an opportunity to have a religion of their choice. I, myself, am prepared to change my religion. But someone should argue with me and change my views and then convert me. Surely, I should have no right to change the religion of my children with me—specially children below a certain age. Those children are considered to be minors who are under teens, that is, below eighteen.

Mr H.V. Kamath: Under teens includes nineteen.

Shri Algu Rai Shastri: However if it is nineteen, it is all the better. Even if it is not possible they should extend minority by a year of grace. The age limit fixed for minors and majors should be adopted in religious matter as well. They say that there would be no incentive for

conversion if people have to forego their children. I hear that in Japan the father has one religion and the child another. What does religion mean? Does the mother feed her baby so that the child's religion might change? If the mother's love is true she will surely feed her baby. Does the mother's milk change the religion? We do not wish to snatch away the child from the mother's lap, but we wish to give to the baby a right to record his (natal) religion in the report of the Census and any other government records, till he attains majority and declares his (new) religion. We give him this right in this amendment. Parents need the company of their children. If they have changed their religion discreetly, let them educate their children. But the change in the religion of the children may be considered (only) on their declaration at reaching majority. This is the purpose of this amendment and I support it, and I strongly oppose the view that this right should not be given to children....

Dr B.R. Ambedkar: Mr President, Sir, I am sorry to say that I do not find myself in agreement with the amendment which had been moved by Mr Munshi relating to the question of the conversion of minor children. The clause, as it stands, probably gives the impression to the House that this question relating to the conversion of minors was not considered by the Fundamental Rights Committee or by the Minorities Sub-Committee or by the Advisory Committee. I should like to assure the House that a good deal of consideration was bestowed on this question and every aspect was examined. It was, after examining the whole question in all its aspects, and seeing the difficulties, which came up, that the Advisory Committee came to the conclusion that they should adhere to the clause as it now stands.

Sir, the difficulty is so clear to my mind that I find no other course but to request Mr Munshi to drop his amendment.

With regard to children, there are three possible cases which can be visualized. First of all, there is the case of children with parents and guardians. There is the case of children who are orphans, who have no parents and no guardians in the legal sense of the word. Supposing you have this clause prohibiting the conversion of children below 18, what is going to be the position of children who are orphans? Are they not going to have any kind of religion? Are they not to have any religious instruction given to them by some one who happens to take a kindly interest in them? It seems to me that, if the clause as worded by Mr Munshi was adopted, namely, that no child below the age of 18 shall be converted it would follow that children who are orphans, who have no legal guardians, cannot have any kind of religious instruction. I am sure that this is not the result which this House would be happy to contemplate. Therefore, such a class of subjects shall have to be excepted from the operation of the amendment proposed by Mr Munshi.

Then, I come to the other class, namely, children with parents and guardians. They may fall into two categories. For the sake of clarity it might be desirable to consider their cases separately; the first is this: where children are converted with the knowledge and consent of their guardians and parents. The second case is that of children of parents who have become converts.

It does seem to me that there ought to be a prohibition upon the conversion of minor children with legal guardians, where the conversion takes place without the consent and knowledge of the legal guardians. That, I think, is a very legitimate proposition. No missionary who wants to convert a child which is under the lawful guardianship of some person, who according to the law of guardianship is entitled to regulate and control the religious faith of that particular child, ought to deprive that person or guardian of the right of having notice and having knowledge

that the child is being converted to another faith. That, I think, is a simple proposition to which there can be no objection.

But when we come to the other case, namely, where parents are converted and we have to consider the case of their children, then I think we come across what I might say a very hard rock. If you are going to say that, although parents may be converted because they are majors and above the age of 18, minors below the age of 18, although they are their children, are not to be converted with the parent, the question that we have to consider is, what arrangement are we going to make with regard to the children? Suppose, a parent is converted to Christianity. Suppose a child of such a parent dies. The parent, having been brought up in the Christian faith, gives the Christian burial to the dead child. Is that act on the part of the parent in giving a Christian burial to the child to be regarded as an offence in law? Take another case. Suppose a parent who has become converted has a daughter. He marries that daughter according to Christian rites. What is to be the consequence of that marriage? What is to be the effect of that marriage? Is that marriage legal or not legal?

If you do not want that the children should be converted, you have to make some other kind of law with regard to guardianship in order to prevent the parents from exercising their rights to influence and shape the religious life of their children. Sir, I would like to ask whether it would be possible for this House to accept that a child of five, for instance, ought to be separated from his parents merely because the parents have adopted Christianity, or some religion which was not originally theirs. I refer to these difficulties in order to show that it is those difficulties which faced the Fundamental Rights Committee, the Minorities Committee and the Advisory Committee and which led them to reject this proposition. It was, because we realized, that the acceptance of the proposition, namely, that a person shall not be converted below the age of 18, would lead to many disruptions, to so many evil consequences, that we thought it would be better to drop the whole thing altogether. (*Hear, hear*) The mere fact that we have made no such reference in clause 17 of the Fundamental Rights does not in my judgment prevent the legislature when it becomes operative from making any law in order to regulate this matter. My submission, therefore, is that the reference back of this clause to a committee for further consideration is not going to produce any better result. I have no objection to the matter being further examined by persons who feel differently about it, but I do like to say that all the three Committees have given their best attention to the subject. I have therefore, come to the conclusion that having regard to all the circumstances of the case, the best way would be to drop the clause altogether. I have no objection to a provision being made that children who have legal and lawful guardians should not be converted without the knowledge and notice of the parents. That, I think, ought to suffice in the case.

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: Sir, this is not a matter free from difficulties. There is no point in introducing any element of heat in this controversy. It is well known in this country that there are mass conversions, conversions by force, conversions by coercion and undue influence, and we cannot disguise the fact that children also have been converted, that children with parents have been converted and that orphans have been converted. Now, we need not go into all the reasons or the forces that led to these conversions, but if the facts are recognized, we who have to live in this country and find a solution to build up a nation,—we need not introduce any heat into this controversy to find a solution. What is the best thing to do under the circumstances? There may be different points of view. There are bound to be differences in the view points of the different communities, but, as Dr Ambedkar has said, this

question has been considered in three Committees and yet we have not been able to find a solution acceptable to all. Let us make one more effort and not carry on this discussion, which will not satisfy everybody. Let this be therefore referred to the Advisory Committee. We shall give one more chance.

Mr President: Do I take it that it is the wish of the House that this clause be referred back to the Advisory Committee for further consideration?

The clause was referred back to the Advisory Committee.

CLAUSE 18—CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: I move clause 18 now.

'(1) Minorities in every Unit shall be protected in respect of their languages, script and culture, and no laws or regulations may be enacted that may operate oppressively or prejudicially in this respect.

(2) No minority whether based on religion, community or language shall be discriminated against in regard to the admission into State educational institutions, nor shall any religious instruction be compulsory imposed on them.

(3) (a) All minorities whether based on religion, community or language shall be free in any Unit to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

(b) The State shall not, while providing State aid to schools, discriminate against schools under the management of minorities whether based on religion, community or language.'

I move this clause for the acceptance of the House.

Shri Mohanlal Saksena (United Provinces: General): Sir, with your permission, I would like to move that this clause be referred back to the Advisory Committee for reconsideration. There are certain aspects which require reconsideration, and, on the whole, I think it would be much better that this whole clause be referred to the Advisory Committee for their reconsideration.

Mr President: Mr Mohanlal Saksena has moved that this clause also be referred back to the Advisory Committee for further consideration....

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: Sir, I rise to support the motion of Mr Mohanlal Saksena. He has only proposed that this clause be referred back to the Advisory Committee. I think, Sir, we are taking this document lightly. It may be that in matters like these, *that is*, cultural and educational rights, they could be defined only as far as they appertain to individuals and the question of minorities had better be left for the future Governments. I think we are binding the hands of our future Governments too much. We should leave them free to do according to the times and the situations they face.

Now, Sir, the question of guaranteeing the rights of minorities with regard to culture and education privileges, I would suggest that in future occasions may arise when the Governments belonging to the Union may have to negotiate with other units and may have to know from them as to what is happening to the minorities that reside in the areas which have not chosen to join the Union. Now, supposing the Governments of the Units which belong to the Union are committed by means of this clause 18 to a certain policy towards the minorities, the people here may feel the necessity of knowing as to what is happening to the minorities who reside in those units which have refused to join the Union and belong to Pakistan or any other parts of India which may organize themselves separately. My suggestion is that on the question of minorities we may not be committed here and this question be left over for the time when

we may definitely know as to whether the whole of India is going to be one Unit or is going to be partitioned into two. If there is to be a partition, we must know what is happening to the minorities on the other side, in the other units. Therefore, the question is not so easy to solve just now. I submit that the whole House will support me when I say that this question had better be hanging fire till we definitely know as to what is going to be the final shape of India and how the Units are going to treat the minorities. I therefore support the motion of Mr Mohanlal Saksena that the consideration of this clause be put off.

Seth Govind Das (CP and Berar: General): Sir, I think the motion before us contains no such clause which can be considered controversial. Mr Mahavir Tyagi has said that we do not know till now whether India is to remain one or is to be partitioned. For reasons which lead him to think that this should be sent to the Advisory Committee, I feel that it should be passed by us today. Whether there is one Hindustan or Pakistan, undivided or divided India—the phantom of this thought sticks to us and we look at all problems when they come up, obsessed with that view.

While supporting the resolution of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru I said that we should not care whether our Muslim League brothers enter the Assembly or not. On the same grounds I again wish to say that we should not care whether India is to remain undivided or is to be divided. We want one India. We want that India should remain one. We are not to stop any of our efforts. I am even against Mr Munshi's amendment, for I cannot see anything in this whole clause against any caste or community. As I have said that without looking to what is going to happen to India in future, we should pass this resolution keeping in view as to what our duties are and what should be done in this Assembly.

Mr D.N. Datta: Mr President, Sir, clause 18, sub-clause (1) says—

‘Minorities in every unit shall be protected in respect of their language, script and culture, and no laws or regulations may be enacted that may operate oppressively or prejudicially in this respect.’

I shall illustrate my point. Suppose in a certain unit there are different communities residing, using different scripts, and that unit intends to make a law that there should be one script instead of different scripts now prevailing. I feel that there may be necessity for the unit to promulgate a law that there should be one script for that particular unit for the benefit of the unit itself, and if that is not allowed by the Fundamental Rights, I think the interests of the Unit will suffer. I cannot suggest what should be the language of the clause under which such laws can be promulgated so that there should be one script for the benefit of the whole Unit. I suggest that this matter may also be referred to the Drafting Committee of the Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee because it is a very fundamental matter. The minority must have a right, but at the same time the Unit itself should also have a right to promulgate such a law—that there should be one script for the whole Unit or province. So, I consider that this matter should be considered by the Fundamental Rights Sub Committee or by Sardarji.

Srijut Rohini Kumar Chaudhury: Mr President, Sir, I wish to draw attention to sub-clause (2) of clause 18:

‘No minority whether based on religion, community or language shall be discriminated against in regard to the admission into State educational institutions, nor shall any religious instruction be compulsorily imposed on them.’

It refers to the compulsory imparting of religious instruction. Clause 16 which also refers to compulsory participation in religious instruction in school has already been referred by this Hon'ble House to the Advisory Committee. So it is only reasonable that we should agree to refer this clause to the same Advisory Committee which will consider clause 16.

I submit, Sir, that other sub-clause of this clause are not inoffensive or free from difficulty as they may seem on surface.

Take for instance, sub-clause (1) which speaks of scripts. Most of the tribal people in our Province have lost their original script. Some have taken to Assamese language and script, but Roman scripts have been recently imposed on them and now most of them are willing to take Hindi scripts which they would not be able to adopt if the sub-clause stands as it is.

Then turning to sub-clause (3) (b), if the clause stands as it is, it will seriously interfere with proper distribution of grants. So, on the whole, I think, instead of remitting sub-clauses piecemeal, it will be wise to refer the whole clause 18 to the Advisory Committee.

Shri Rajkrushna Bose (Orissa: General): I suggest, Sir, that clause 18 as moved by Sardar Patel and the amendment of Mr Munshi, should be taken up for consideration now and the House should come to a decision in the matter. It seems that there is a move to refer clauses like this back to the Advisory Committee and it has become a little too catching and therefore we are not in a position to do anything here but refer back to the Advisory Committee. Let us not forget that before these clauses passed through the Committee, they had passed through two other Committees, namely, the Minorities Rights Sub-Committee and the Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee. Clause 18 which we are now considering is so very simple and innocuous that it really needs no referring back to the Advisory Committee again. Three sub-clauses are attached to it, one is that the language, script and culture should be preserved and no laws or regulation may be enacted that may operate oppressively or prejudicially in this respect. If we are going to have one script in India as was suggested by Mr Datta, it may create difficulties and any unit which wants to have a common script for the whole unit will have difficulties if this sub-clause is kept.

Well, my contention is that the sub-clause should be retained as it is, just because, if today we raise the question of wiping out languages or scripts when we are framing our first independent constitution, there may be any number of complications and difficulties and misunderstandings and at a time when we are having a lot of other difficulties we should not invite any more now. Therefore, we ought to keep the first sub-clause as it has been kept in the original. Then sub-clause (3) (a) reads:

'All minorities whether based on religion, community or language, shall be free in any Unit to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.'

This is a right, Sir, which I think no country can take away and ought to take away and all constitutions should concede this right to the minorities. It is such a simple thing that it needs no reference back to the Advisory Committee again. Now, sub-clause (3) (b) reads:

'The State shall not, while providing State aid to schools discriminate against schools under the management of minorities whether based on religion, community or language.'

This again is such a simple question. If any minority wants to start a school of its own in any unit or in any part of the Union, certainly you are not going to forbid them from doing so, or pass laws whereby they cannot have this ordinary right. If you are going to do that, all your claim to give protection to the minorities will be reduced to a farce. Therefore, I do not see

why this simple clause, namely clause 18, with all its sub-clauses should be referred back to the Advisory Committee. Of course, a point has been raised by one of the members that the consideration of matters relating to minorities should be put off till we know the mind of the Pakistanists in the matter and the rights they are going to concede to the minorities in their areas. Well, Sir, if, knowing fully well that those who oppose India's independence today like the Muslim League are adopting dilatory tactics to delay our freedom we put off our business till Doomsday or wait till they have made some decisions, we shall have to wait indefinitely. If, say for instance, they go beyond June 1948 to reach a decision with regard to these matters, are we to postpone our decisions on matters so simple and ordinary. I think, Sir, that it will be foolish on our part to delay decisions on matters like these, and therefore clause 18 as moved by Sardar Patel and amended by Mr Munshi should be adopted by the House.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar: Mr President, Sir, I confess that I am considerably surprised at these amendments—both by Mr Munshi as well as Mr Tyagi. They have, I submit, given no reason why this clause 18 should be referred back to the Committee. The only reason in support of this proposal—one can sense—is that the rights of minorities should be relative, that is to say, we must wait and see what rights the minorities are given by the Pakistan Assembly before we determine the rights we want to give to the minorities in the Hindustan area. Now, Sir, with all deference, I must deprecate any such idea. Rights of minorities should be absolute rights. They should not be subject to any consideration as to what another party may like to do to minorities within its jurisdiction. If we find that certain minorities in which we are interested and which are within the jurisdiction of another State have not got the same rights which we have given to minorities in our territory, it would be open for the State to take up the matter in a diplomatic manner and see that the wrongs are rectified. But no matter what others do, I think we ought to do what is right in our own judgment and personally I think that the rights which are indicated in clause 18 are rights which every minority, irrespective of any other consideration is entitled to claim. The first right that we have given is the right to use their language, their script and their culture. We have stated that ‘there shall be no discrimination on the ground of religion, language, etc.’ in the matter of admission into State educational institutions. We have said that ‘no minority shall be precluded from establishing any educational institution which such minority may wish to establish’. It is also stated there that whenever a State decides to provide aid to schools or other educational institutions maintained by the minority, they shall not discriminate in the matter of giving grant on the basis of religion, community or language. Sir, I cannot understand how there can be any objection to these rights which have been indicated in clause 18. At any rate, nobody who has supported the motion that this may be referred back to the Committee has advanced any argument that either these rights are in excess of what a minority ought to have or are such that a minority ought not to have them. Therefore, it seems to me a great pity that the labours of three Committees which have evolved these provisions should be so brusquely set aside simply because for some reasons people want that this matter should be referred back to the Committee. I do not know what objection my friend Mr Munshi has to sub-clause (2) as it stands, but if it is necessary that this sub-clause may be referred back to the Committee I certainly would raise no objection. That sub-clause may be referred back because I understand that we have limited this matter to State educational institutions and we have said nothing about those which are only State-aided. If that point needs to be further clarified the matter may be referred back, but, because there may be something to be said in favour of the reference back of sub-clause (2) I do not see that

the same logic could be extended to the whole of the clause. I submit therefore that the clause as it stands, should be passed, barring sub-clause (2) which may, if necessary, be referred back to the Committee for consideration.

Shri Lakshminarayan Sahu: Mr President, Sir, while I was speaking some time before, I was just telling that I welcomed this clause 18 in the Fundamental Rights, because this is the first time that minorities will feel happy that they have got some definite rights. I was referring to the question of who should be called a minority about which I have my doubts. But I hope they will be cleared by further discussions. But as it is, I welcome this clause. I want to show that in Midnapore district the population of Oriyas has been mutilated to a very great extent so much so that today we do not find in the census figures any Oriya as such. In 1891 the census number of Oriyas was 6 lakhs. In 1901 it was reduced to 3 lakhs and in 1911 it was reduced to less than 2 lakhs. In 1921 it was 1,40,000 and in 1931 the figure is only 45,000.

Now, the same thing has happened in the southern portion of Orissa. The Utkal Union Conference for over 40 years agitated to get a separate province for Orissa only in order to get their minority rights, because as minorities they were not safe in any of the provinces, and when they got a separate province they were very happy. Now the question has come about the language. Referring to only one district there, out of the six districts of Orissa,—to Ganjam,—there is great language difficulty there. The Vizagapatnam District Gazetteer of 1906 writes:

‘The language of the district forms a veritable bable. In Gunjam 940 out of a 1,000 speak Telugu in their houses, 14 talk Oriya, 9 Khond, 7 Gadaba, 5 Hindusthani. But among the same number in the Agency, 451 speak Oriya, 204 Khond, 180 Telugu, 56 Savara, 30 Poroja, 23 Gadaba, 11 Koya, 3 Hindustani, 3 Gondi and 5 other vernaculars such as Labadi, Bastari, Hindi, Chhatiskari, etc.’

This difficulty about language has been felt in our province because a section of the people are Andhras and they are claiming that their children should be educated right up to the college stage through the medium of their own mother-tongue. And this should be decided clearly. I hope that by a clause like this these difficulties will be removed and our culture will be intact in those places where the Oriyas will be left outside their province; and so also the culture of other people who will be left in the province of Orissa will be properly safeguarded. But I would like to know what should be the language of the province and also the language of the different aboriginal people who are in the province of Orissa. As I have already said, there are any number of aboriginals speaking any number of different languages. Some of the aboriginal workers who are coming up claim that their language must be respected. In Orissa, if we respect every language it will be very difficult for the provincial Government to run the administration.

Quite apart from all the above difficulties which may be solved by the Units, I welcome this clause 18 which safeguards our cultural and educational rights.

Mr President: We have two amendments. One is from Mr Mohanlal Saksena.

Shri Mohanlal Saksena: Sir, I beg leave to withdraw my amendment.

The amendment was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Mr President: Then the other is from Mr Munshi to refer back sub-clause (2) to the Committee.

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: I accept it.

The amendment of Mr Munshi was adopted.

Mr President: Then I put the amended clause to the House now leaving out sub-clause (2) and retaining sub-clause (1) and sub-clause (3) (a) and (b).

Clause 18, as amended, was accepted.

Mr President: I think we have just come nearly to 12–30. So we shall stop today and take up the work again at 9 o'clock tomorrow.

The Assembly then adjourned till Nine of the Clock on Friday, the 2nd May, 1947.

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA

Friday, the 2nd May, 1947

The Constituent Assembly of India met in the Constitution Hall, New Delhi, at Nine of the Clock, Mr President (The Hon'ble Dr Rajendra Prasad) in the Chair.

INTERIM REPORT ON FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS—**contd.**

Mr President: We shall resume further discussion on the remaining clauses of the Fundamental Rights. Clause 19.

Clause 19.—Miscellaneous Rights.

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (Bombay: General): I beg to move clause 19. The clause runs thus:

'No property, movable or immovable, of any person or corporation including any interest in any commercial or industrial undertaking, shall be taken or acquired for public use unless the law provides for the payment of compensation for the property taken or acquired and specified the principles on which and the manner in which the compensation is to be determined.'

I do not expect any amendments to this motion, but if there are any, we shall consider them in time. ...

Prof K.T. Shah (Bihar: General): Mr President, I have given notice of an amendment to add the following proviso to clause 19:

'Provided that no rights of individual private property shall be recognized in forms of natural wealth, like rivers or flowing waters, coastal waters, mines and minerals, or forests.'

But as this raises many complicated issues, I do not move it but suggest that this should go back to the Advisory Committee.

Mr President: Do you move the amendment?

Prof K.T. Shah: No, Sir.

Mr President: There is only one amendment to this clause. The clause and the amendment are both for discussion.

Shri S. Nagappa (Madras: General): Mr President, I rise to offer my support to this clause proposed by the Hon'ble Mover of this Report. This is a clause that gives some hope to the poor tiller of the soil. This clause gives a promise to the people of the country that the Union Government or the Unit Governments are going to acquire property, landed or other sort of property, from either individuals or corporations or from industrialists or commercial concerns,

in the public interest and that, when they do so, they are going to compensate them. Now, Sir, what sort of compensation is to be paid? There are difficulties in the way of settling this matter. I want that in paying compensation we must be reasonable. Now the question arises as to what is reasonable compensation. It seems to me, Sir, that when we are acquiring landed property from a zamindar, we need not pay as much as he wants. We need pay only what is reasonably required to enable him to maintain himself and his family for one or two generations. That is the only thing necessary to do to fulfil the kind of assurance which the Congress has given to these zamindars and jagirdars in their election manifesto. My humble request is that the Government should accept my interpretation of what reasonable compensation is. For instance, if a poor man's property is acquired for a particular purpose, then, in giving him compensation, care must be taken to see that it is reasonable in the particular case. In such a case the Government must pay him the cost of the land and something more even. But when the Government acquire lands from a zamindar, they need not pay the actual market rate or the local rate to make the compensation paid reasonable. You have to fix the compensation keeping in view the manner in which the zamindar acquired that property. That is my contention, Sir.

Then, Sir, I submit that when once you acquire land, you must see that the tiller of the soil is made the owner of the soil. Then alone we will be able to give a kind of encouragement to the toilers and make them increase the produce and the national wealth for the maintenance of the country. I hope this clause will not stand in the way of the provinces pushing forward land legislation which they have in some cases already undertaken. For instance, my respected leader of Andhradesa, Sri T. Prakasam, has already done a lot for the abolition of the zamindari system in Madras and the Madras Government are pushing forward legislation for the abolition of zamindaris. Once the zamindaris are abolished and the Government acquire their properties, it must be their endeavour to make the best use of such properties. The Government must see to it that collective farms are formed and that, through them, the maximum is produced and the tiller is given sufficient for what he does. These are the hopes which the particular clause gives to the poor tillers of the soil.

Now, Sir, so far as the industries are concerned I have been day in and day out asking in the Madras Legislative Assembly for their nationalization. That does not mean that we need not encourage private bodies to take to industrialization. We have to go forward in this respect. Our country is very backward industrially. If we are to move quickly forward, we must go to the extent of granting subsidies to our industries and nationalise them as soon as possible. When private enterprise has fully developed and when the country thinks that particular industries should be taken over by the Government for public benefit, reasonable compensation must be paid. In these cases it would be reasonable compensation if we offer the persons who started those industries ample funds to fall back upon. That is my interpretation of the word 'reasonable' in this respect.

Sir, these are two main points that should be borne in mind when legislation is undertaken for the abolition of zamindaris and nationalization of industries.

Once again, I offer my thanks to the Hon'ble Mover for bearing in mind this particular class of tillers of the soil who would be getting their due share of the results of their labours. I also thank you, Mr President, for giving me this opportunity to speak on this motion.

Dr Suresh Chandra Banerjee (Bengal: General): Mr President, Sir, I had naturally hoped that we would make some progress towards socialization at least when we gained our independence within a few months, but in these fundamental rights nothing has been put in

regard to socialization. I would have been really happy, had the amendment of Prof K.T. Shah been accepted, because there is an element of socialization there. I feel that in a country like India where poverty is so acute, where general condition of the workers and peasants is so miserable, nothing but socialization can give some hope of improvement in the future. So, I would have been happy if the House had accepted the amendment of Prof Shah. But I know, Sir, the difficulties with which we are faced at present. We know, Sir, how many interests are represented here. Here, we have to consider the case of the Indian Princes, we have to consider the case of the Anglo-Indians, of the Christians and so many other people. As a matter of fact, it is a matter of great consolation to us that we have been able to find out a solution for reconciling so many interests. So, in the present context, we cannot press for any amendment like this, but still I do hope that in the near future when India gets her independence, it will be possible to have some kind of socialization. With these words, Sir, I support the clause as it stands.

Shri Ajit Prasad Jain (United Provinces: General): I rise to make a few observations on this clause. I had given an amendment for the total deletion of this clause, but it became unnecessary to move that amendment for I could express my ideas during the course of general discussion. This clause reproduces a part of Section 299 of the Government of India Act, 1935, with a certain amount of amplitude. It says that no property, whether movable or immovable, shall be acquired for public use unless the law provides for the payment of compensation. We have some experience of the working of Section 299 of the Government of India Act. The House must be aware that in several Congress Provinces measures for the abolition of zamindari system are under consideration. In the United Provinces we passed a resolution for the abolition of zamindari system on payment of equitable compensation. That resolution follows the line laid down in the Congress Election Manifesto. In working out how the compensation should be calculated, we were faced with great difficulties. There was the question of the financial capacity of the State. If we fix compensation at a figure which the State could not pay, it would mean that the zamindari should continue to exist. We had also to see how much profits the landlords have made in the past from the zamindari. The question of the origin of zamindari also became relevant. Some of the zamindaris in our provinces have been acquired for helping the British by acts of treachery during the first war of independence in 1857. We could not ignore the market price of the zamindari either. After a careful consideration of these various factors we are trying to fix compensation for the zamindaris. On the other hand the landlords have been interpreting the word 'compensation' to mean full compensation, *that is*, the market price of the land. Some of them have threatened that they will go to the Federal Court for interpretation of the word 'compensation'. We have no manner of doubt that it is impossible for the State to pay full compensation. Then the choice before us is to leave the zamindari as it is. Sir, land acquisition may take either of two shapes. It may be acquisition of a specified property for a specified purpose. In that case the State may pay not only its full value but something more for the compulsory acquisition as is provided in the Land Acquisition Act. There may be other cases in which property may not be acquired as a solitary thing. It may take the shape of a measure of social or economic reform for the welfare of the society. For instance, we may have to acquire factories, mines and industries for nationalization. In such cases the acquisition of the property will be for social use for the upliftment and betterment of the society. The property is being acquired in the interest of the large masses of the people. And in such cases considerations which may prevail in the cases of isolated acquisition will not

apply. The State may not be in a position to pay full compensation. In fact, there may be only a nominal compensation or no compensation at all. This clause, if accepted as it stands, will stand in the way of large scale social and economic reforms. It will cover all the cases where property is being acquired for social or economic improvements. It is none of my intentions that the State should act as a robber or a bandit and arbitrarily seize properties of the people, but measures of social reforms stand on quite a different level. That is the reason why a number of amendments, which were not moved, had been tabled in the direction pointed out by me. Fundamental Rights in my opinion are embodied in the Constitution with a view to protect the weak and the helpless. The present clause will have just the contrary effect. It will protect the microscopic minority of propertied class and deny rights of social justice to the masses. I am, therefore, totally opposed to this clause and I do hope that the Hon'ble Mover will keep this in mind and refer the clause back to the Advisory Committee so that any provision which we pass today may not stand in the way of social and economic reforms which are necessary to bring prosperity and plenty to the country. With these few remarks, I commend my point of view for the consideration of the House.

Mr R.K. Sidhwa (CP and Berar: General): Mr President, Sir, one would have expected that under the present economic conditions prevailing in the country, there would be a clause for acquiring property in a different manner. It is very deplorable that at the present moment when various legislatures are out to abolish the jagirdari and zamindari systems by payment of a small compensation or no compensation, under this clause we are asked to pay compensation for any property that is going to be acquired. In free India where we should expect the property clause to be more liberal and beneficial to the people, we find that we are helping the upper class people by passing this clause.

Sir, the word 'property' is very vague. 'Property' includes public utility concerns like electric corporations, transport organizations, and other things. We are well aware that in many provinces these public utility concerns are being nationalised and I am sure that in a very short time to come almost all the public utility concerns will be nationalised. In fact, under the bureaucratic system of Government, all the railways have been nationalised by payment of any 'goodwill' that may have been specified under the agreement. I know, Sir, that the agreements with local bodies under which some electric concerns are working, provide for acquiring such concerns without any compensation being given. If you pass this clause, it would mean that although the agreements do not provide for it, we have to pay compensation, to these public utility concerns when we acquire them. Is it fair, may I ask, that the public utility concerns which are for the benefit of consumers and the people, and which in all countries eventually may become the property of the people, are to be taken over by paying the actual invested capital plus compensation even if there is no clause as to the payment of compensation? I do feel, Sir, that this clause requires amendment at least as far as the public utility concerns are concerned. But, Sir, I am helpless as I could not move an amendment. I would have been [*sic*] desired that this clause should have been amended or have gone back to the Advisory Committee under the circumstances I mentioned. If it is not going, I hope that this will receive the consideration of the Mover, because it will be really doing great injustice to the consumers,—that though in the agreement there is no clause of compensation we shall be bound to give it and in a small province they would have to take over concerns by paying them the actual amount invested plus compensation.

Mr President: Do you mean to say that an agreement will be affected by this clause?

Mr R.K. Sidhwa: Yes, Sir, No property shall be taken or acquired for public use unless the law provides for the payment of compensation, says the clause. Now, Sir, the law will be made certainly in accordance with this clause and a demand for compensation will be made even if there is nothing in the agreement.

Mr President: The acquisition itself will be provided for in the agreement.

Mr R.K. Sidhwa: If the law provides that a compensation is to be paid and if in the agreement there is no clause, then we will be bound down. I, as a common sense man, feel—of course, the legal luminaries may say, if they enlighten me I shall welcome it, but, as a common sense man, I feel that, if there is an agreement in which there is no clause for compensation and if you are enacting an Act for giving the compensation, they will claim from us the compensation. And owner of the property in that event will go to the Supreme Court and get his demand fulfilled under the clause.

Shri Vishwambhar Dayal Tripathi: Mr President, I stand here to oppose the amendment moved by my friend, Raja Jagannath Bakhsh Singh. His amendment says that the word 'just' should be added before the word 'compensation' here. I oppose this most emphatically. So far as this clause is concerned, not only I but most of my friends apprehend, that its wordings are such that their effect, particularly the legal effect, would not be to the good of the country to the same extent as it ought to be. I want that the words in the clause be changed so that it may not go against the interests of the country as apprehended by us. I would appeal to the gentlemen who drafted this clause to reconsider it and put before us a new 'formula'.

It is proper and I accept it that when we acquire property of any one it is necessary to give compensation for it. This too I accept that in most cases compensation should correspond to the value of the property. But at the same time I also believe that we must also see as to how the property was originally acquired by the person concerned. If it was acquired justly, compensation ought to be given according to its value. If the property was not acquired justly or if the holder has earned sufficient profit from the same it is wrong to give him full compensation or to pay its full price. If we want to change the existing social order, if we want to change the present order of zamindari and capitalism and at the same time say that full compensation should be given for the property taken by the State, it would mean that we would not be able completely to do away with the present social order. If we have really to change this order, if we really want to implement the resolution passed by AICC on 8th August 1942, which promised to frame a constitution wherein the real power is vested in the workers in farms and factories, we have to reconsider these clauses. If this clause is left as it is, undoubtedly various obstacles will come up in our way of fulfilling the promises and declarations made by us before the country from time to time. Therefore, I again request the framers of this clause to reconsider it.

We have before us the question of ending zamindari in several provinces. We have also before us the question of payment of compensation to the Zamindars. There are all kinds of difficulties before us. I am a member of the UP Zamindari Abolition Committee which has to deal with such questions. I can say with all the authority at my command that if we have to pay the compensation for zamindari according to its market value, I have no doubt that it will be almost impossible for us to end zamindari; and even if it could be made possible, it would result in the peasantry remaining burdened for another 20 or 25 years to the same extent as they are today. After all from what source the compensation will be paid? It will be taken from

the pockets of the poor. Under these circumstances for another 20 or 25 years the peasants will have to remain under the same financial burden which they have to bear today. They will not benefit in any way for this period of 20 or 25 years. Besides the statement of Raja Sahib that 'just' compensation should be paid is rather extremely odd. Is Raja Sahib prepared that a general examination of the titles of the Zamindars in respect of their landed property be undertaken to verify as to how many of these titles can be termed just? If he agrees to this his amendment may be considered. There are many estates in the country and particularly in Oudh, to which province Raja Sahib belongs, which were acquired by the present holders as rewards for their traitorous support to the English during the Mutiny of 1857. The recipients of these estates had no estate previously. The Englishmen gave them these estates for their treachery against India. Raja Jagannath Bakhsh Singh claims that the Zamindars participated in the war of liberation of 1857. I welcome those who had fought for freedom and I do recommend that they should be given the maximum concessions. Raja Sahib knows that there are instances of many who betrayed their countrymen and in return for their treachery received big estates. Such people have no right to demand compensation. Many of them enjoy exemption from payment of revenue, and have been continuously enjoying the profits of these estates for the last 90 years. They have been realizing rent from the tenants for the last 90 years without having had to pay even a pie of land revenue. If any body had even paid the price for it, he has already received five times its value. Those who acquired these estates as a reward for their betrayal of the country now demand compensation! The question of 'just' compensation does not arise so long as we have not examined the validity of the titles to these estates. Even if the word 'just' is not added here the clause as it stands, can be widely interpreted to include compensation to those who were never entitled to receive these estates, who have been receiving the profits of the estates for nearly 90 years and many of whom had not even to pay any land revenue to the Government. It would be improper to pay any compensation to these people. There is a 'saving grace' in this clause that the Government would consider the principles and basis on which compensation should be given.

It is my frank opinion that they should be given something as maintenance allowance for some years so that they may be able to live in, and adjust themselves to, the new and changed circumstances. I have no objection to this. I do not like, and nobody would like, that many of these people should be reduced to destitution and starvation. Therefore, if compensation can be supported it can be only on the basis that zamindars and capitalists should be given some amount for maintenance for a few years so that they may keep themselves alive without difficulties in the new economic set-up. If we want that the existing order of zamindari and capitalism should be done away with, it is desirable that compensation should be given on the basis of maintenance for a few years. But what I fear and suspect is that the clause in question may be legally so interpreted that our economic progress may be retarded, and the Congress and other important public organizations may not freely advance in the direction they intend to. Therefore, I oppose the amendment moved by Raja Sahib and at the same time request my respected friends, who have framed this clause, to reconsider it. If it is accepted as it is, disastrous consequences may follow. Therefore I beg to put these two requests of mine before you and hope that the Hon'ble President and my other friends would accept them.

Shri V.C. Kesava Rao (Madras: General): Mr President, Sir, I stand to support the clause, but I want to make some observations on that.

This clause provides compensation to the citizen whose property will be acquired for the use of the public. When the State acquires any person's property, it is only for the benefit of the public and not of any individual. If such acquiring deprives a citizen of his livelihood, it is necessary to pay compensation equivalent to the property one loses. And I think nobody disputes such a compensation.

We are framing a constitution for free India. We are asking the British to quit India though they came here 200 years ago. We know that the British acquired India by foul means and not by hard labour. As the owners of this country, we have the right to ask them to leave the country, and in response to our demand, they are quitting India by June, 1948. In free India nobody wishes to be exploited by another. The big landlords and the Zamindars did not get their land and property by hard labour. In this respect there is no difference between the Zamindar and the British imperialist. The British acquired Empires and the Zamindars acquired large fortunes—both by means of exploitation.

In Free India it is necessary to keep all the citizens on the same footing. This may not be possible for some time to come due to the system prevalent in this country. The common cry of the tenant is that the whole produce collected by him is taken away by the landlord even though he requires some of it for the maintenance of his family. There is no other way for him except starvation. Is the State prepared to give him any livelihood or a compensation for the loss of his energy and for his labour? But if a Zamindar who exploits the poor and amasses wealth is deprived of a portion of his property for the benefit of the public, the State thinks of giving compensation for the loss, though it is not a loss to him actually. The present day request of a tenant is the reduction of rent for his land. But this request will lead to the snatching away of the little land he has been cultivating and maintaining his family with. The Zamindar is prepared to keep the land waste and not to reduce the rent. Thus he allows his tenant to starve.

Lastly, I wish to point out that the Indian National Congress has been fighting for the abolition of the system of Zamindari and even in the last election, it gave an undertaking to the masses that the Zamindari system will be abolished as soon as the Congress comes into power. And accordingly, the Congress Provincial Governments have prepared their Bills for the abolition of it. Now, when we are asked to frame the Constitution for Free India, we want to compensate them in the manner in which the law fixes. The law will be always in their favour and they get more than what is necessary.

In view of the above facts, I request the House to consider and amend the clause in such a way that only a nominal compensation may be payable for acquisition of the property of a citizen or a Corporation.

Rai Bahadur Syamanandan Sahaya (Bihar: General): Sir, I would like to make a few submissions in connection with the amendment which has been moved by my Hon'ble friend, Raja Jagannath Bakhsh Singh. His amendment only suggests the addition of the word 'just' before the word 'compensation'. I have been anxiously and carefully listening to the debate and I must say, I have heard nothing so far that there should be no justice exercised in the matter of the payment of compensation. No one has suggested, and I dare say, no one will suggest, that once we accede to the principle that acquisition of private property must be preceded by the payment of compensation, such compensation should be an unjust one. This, I submit, cannot be the contention of anybody in an august assembly like this. After all, the future of this country depends on the justice and fair-play that we exercise in dealing with the different problems confronting us here and in the tact and ability that we display in dealing with the

affairs of international policy. I submit, Sir, whatever may be said about those who own lands at present, it cannot be denied that at one time they were the pioneers in building up the economic structure of this country a couple of centuries ago. They have earned and they have made money, but is that a ground for now taking away the property from them and paying them no compensation and even going to the extent of incorporating in the fundamental rights that they should get compensation and then arguing that it should be an unjust compensation. I do not think that any such proposition can be placed before this House, and even if it is placed, I do not think it will find acceptance in this House.

Well, Sir, what is the demand that the amendment puts forward? It says the word 'compensation' should be qualified. The Hon'ble Mover has referred to other constitutions in the world where the word 'compensation' has been qualified by the word 'just'. This is not the only word which has been used. If we refer to the constitutional series on Fundamental Rights which was circulated to us by Sir B.N. Rau, it will be found that even in the German Constitution the words used are 'due compensation'. It is said there—

'Expropriation may be effected only for the benefit of the general community and upon the basis of law. It shall be accompanied by due compensation.'

I therefore submit, Sir, that the use of the word 'just' could only indicate the real purpose behind what is embodied in the Report of the Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee, unless some members are prepared to argue that you might as well put the word 'compensation' there but be prepared to face the fact that it might be unjust compensation in certain circumstances. I contend, Sir, that that cannot be a correct and a proper approach to the problem nor a valid argument.

Then, Sir, the whole argument of all those who have opposed the amendment has centred round the question of the acquisition of the Zamindari. These friends unfortunately have either ignored knowingly or failed to appreciate that this compensation clause does not cover Zamindari alone. It covers the whole field of movable and immovable property in the country,—in the Union or in the Units. It may be necessary in the larger interest of the country at a later stage even to acquire 'Kashtakari', *that is*, tenants' lands. If you want to introduce cooperative farming or communal farming, it may be necessary to acquire even the tenants' lands. Would you deny them a just compensation? A proposition therefore like this which covers such a wide field—not merely Zamindari but even commercial interests and so many other interests—must, I submit, be placed beyond all doubts and suspicions. If I may submit, Sir, the right to private property and the protection of private property are the acceptance of the principle of right over might. You may choose to do away with it if you like, but we shall then all slowly drift towards jungle laws rather than good laws meant to keep society together. Some friends have also referred to the fact that certain zamindars got all their property for anti-national work during 1857 Revolution. The Hon'ble Mover of the amendment has questioned this remark. I will go a little further and submit that these Hon'ble friends have probably incomplete knowledge of the Zamindari system and therefore it is that they have come to the conclusions that many or most of the Zamindars acquired their property as a gift after the 1857 Revolution. They forget that in certain parts of the country the Permanent Settlement Act was enacted as early as 1793 much before the 1857 Revolution. It cannot be said of them that they got their Zamindari because of certain anti-national work. There may have been some people, whose conduct may not have been such as one would like, but you are dealing with a community and not individuals. You are dealing with the whole land problem, and

when you are doing that, it is essential that the whole question and the entire picture must be within your consideration. There are also a large number of people who have paid good money and purchased Zamindari—not a hundred years before as some think. Zamindaris have been bought and sold every day. People have bought Zamindari only this year by paying good money, earned money which they have accumulated as their life's savings. Who does not know that until only a few years ago our main investment out of our savings was only in lands? It will certainly be unfair not to give them compensation—and a compensation which is just and fair. My suggestion, Sir, to the Hon'ble the Mover of the main clause and to the Mover of the amendment will be that the word 'compensation' itself means 'just and fair compensation'. Compensation cannot be, in my opinion, unjust and unfair, and I submit that if the Hon'ble Mover of the main clause feels precisely as I do, that compensation means just and fair compensation, then my advice to the Hon'ble the Mover of the amendment would be that he need not press his amendment.

Raja Jagannath Bakhsh Singh: In view of the discussion that has taken place, Sir, I would not like to press my amendment. I beg leave to withdraw my amendment.

The amendment was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Mr President: Now, the discussion will only be about the whole clause.

Sri Lakshminarayan Sahu (Orissa: General): Mr President, Sir, while I approve of the clause as it stands now, I want to make certain observations especially with regard to Orissa Zamindaris. In Orissa the state of tenants is very bad and that is due to the people of Orissa receiving English education a little later than the people of Bengal and elsewhere. What happened was the Zamindaris that were in Orissa were transferred to the hands of absentee landlords in Bengal and the result has been that two-thirds of North Orissa—as it is called now—*that is*, the districts of Balasore, Cuttack, Puri and Sambalpur—two-thirds of the land in these districts are in the hands of absentee landlords and the result has been extremely disastrous. When they bought these Zamindaris they did not purchase them for a fair price. In fact, the Government records say that there was broad day-light robbery and that is how these Zamindaris were purchased. I, therefore, do not see why we should give any compensation to such Zamindars who bought these lands by a fluke or acquired them by broad day-light robbery.

Secondly, I want to draw the attention of the House to another Zamindar, the Zamindar of Jeypore. Now Jeypore Zamindari constitutes the whole of the Koraput District, which is one of the six districts of Orissa. It is a great pity that the Zamindari gives 16,000 rupees per annum to the Government but enjoys an income of Rs 16 lakhs per annum. This state of things is extremely bad and it must be cured. It is very difficult to run the administration in the presence of such Zamindars. I, therefore, say that while giving compensation—and I also say while giving just compensation—we should be very just to these absentee landlords of Bengal and also to such landlords as the landlord of Jeypore Zamindari in Orissa. These are the things that I wanted to say, in particular, about Orissa.

Another thing I want to say is that in future when trying to build up a democratic State, we cannot bear that such a state of things as the existence of these Zamindars, which is very galling, should be allowed to continue for some time more to come. The sooner the Zamindars are paid off the better. I have nothing more to say except to add that out of 100 zamindars at least 99 today have a very bad name and the duties that have been imposed on them are not performed by them. Take, for instance, one duty of the Zamindar. It is a part of their duty laid

down by Government that they should look after the interests of the cultivators. They never look to the interests of the cultivators. On the other hand, the cultivators are rack-rented too much. There are so many illegal cesses which they take. If I were to narrate them one after another, it would make a very long list. In fact, there has been great agitation in one of the Zamindaris in Orissa—*that is*, the estate of Kanika—where 64 different kinds of illegal cesses were taken. Now, in spite of agitation the same situation exists even today. The tenants are harassed in many ways. Therefore, when we are promised a democratic republic and that too very soon, I say we cannot bear the oppression of Zamindars. The sooner the Zamindars are paid off the better.

Mr Satyanarayan Sinha (Bihar: General): I move: Sir, that the question be now put. The matter has been sufficiently discussed.

Mr President: I have got some more names. Mr Phool Singh.

Shri Phool Singh (United Provinces: General): Mr President, Sir, several speeches have been made from the floor of the House, which go to show that some compensation is proposed to be given in lieu of the abolition of Zamindari. It is true, as Bishwambhar Dayal Tripathi has said, that many people acquired their zamindari by being traitors to the country. In reply to that a Raja Sahib has said that some of them have also helped in the freedom-struggle of the country. I submit that no reward has been given to men who helped the country. In that war, lands were forfeited. It would be an unusual case if one was granted an estate for fighting against the Government. Anyway, the question just now is one of compensation. One of the reasons that is constantly advanced in favour of granting compensation is the Government of India Act of 1935, and whenever any person raises the point that no compensation should be paid then he is told that it can only be done after the repeal of the Government of India Act of 1935. But today the very same clause is being passed by the Constituent Assembly, and I think, by putting it, not in the country's Constitution but in the list of its Fundamental Rights, the question is being closed once for all. Many people have spoken on the question of zamindari, but there is a much bigger problem than zamindari. It is industry. Who does not know that during the last five or six years of the war, many mill-owners have earned profits several times more than their invested capital? Take the Textile Industry in which, on the paid-up capital of nearly fifty crore rupees, some hundred crores of rupees have accrued as profits. It would not be very proper to compare this country with others. During this war capitalists of no other country have reaped as much profits as Indian capitalists. Therefore, what I want to say is that by passing the clause in its present form we would be running the risk of permanently obstructing the possibility of reform in this country for ever. I appeal to my elders and others, who guide the thinking of this House, to ponder again over this clause and to re-shape it in a way so as not to make it impossible for the coming generations to introduce reforms if they choose. Section 16 in its present form, as it has been placed before the House, if passed, will make nationalization of industry very difficult, if not impossible. I do not want to take any more time of this House, but I request you to refer this clause back for further consideration.

Sri Rajkrushna Bose (Orissa: General): Sir, I move that the question be now put.

Mr President: There is a motion that the question be now put. I think we have had enough discussion and I would like to take the sense of the House. The question is:

‘That the question be now put.’

The motion was adopted.

Mr President: Sardar Patel will give his reply.

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: Sir, the discussion on this question has gone on a wrong track. An amendment was moved by somebody, which has been subsequently withdrawn, but those who took part in the debate assumed that this clause was intended for the purpose of acquiring Zamindaris. That is, to say the least, not understanding the real meaning of the clause. Land will be required for many public purposes, not only land but so many other things may have to be acquired. And the State will acquire them after paying compensation and not expropriate them. That is the real meaning of the clause. But the Zamindars or some of their representatives thought that their interests must be safeguarded by moving an amendment or by making a speech here. But they are not going to safeguard these interests in this way. They must recognize the times and move with the times. This clause here will not become the law tomorrow or the day after; it will take at least a year more, and before that, most of the Zamindaris will be liquidated. Even under the present Acts or laws in the different provinces legislation is being brought in to liquidate Zamindaris either by paying just compensation or adequate compensation or whatever the legislatures there think fit. Therefore, it is wrong to think that this clause is intended really for them. It is not so. The process of acquisition is already there and the legislatures are already taking steps to liquidate the Zamindaris. Therefore, we must not or need not go into the question whether the Zamindars have in the past been patriotic or a nuisance or anything of that kind. It is all irrelevant and we need not go into the past.

There is no amendment to this clause and, therefore, I do not have to say anything by way of answer. I move that the clause as moved by me be passed.

Mr President: I put clause No. 19 to the House.

Clause 19 was adopted.

21. Question of Citizenship

Report of the Ad-hoc Committee on Citizenship and a Note by D.P. Khaitan, 1 May 1947

B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), *Framing of India's Constitution*, Vol. II, pp. 678–9.

We have, after full consideration, redrafted the clause relating to citizenship thus:

Every person born in the Union and subject to its jurisdiction; every person either of whose parents was, at the time of such person's birth, a citizen of the Union; and every person naturalised in the Union shall be a citizen of the Union.

Further provision regarding the acquisition and termination of Union citizenship may be made by the law of the Union.

The inclusion in the clause of children born in the Union even of non-citizens, provided they are subject to Union jurisdiction, is a well-marked feature of Anglo-American public law. This principle has been accepted in the Indian Naturalization Act, 1926. There is some authority for the view that the children of visiting foreigners are on the same footing as the children of foreign ambassadors and would as such be regarded as non-citizens even if born in the Union because of the qualifying phrase 'and subject to its jurisdiction'. In any event, such cases are likely to be so few and far between that it is unnecessary in our opinion to make a special exception to exclude them from citizenship. As regards the possibility of double nationality, this is a well-known phenomenon, but it can be provided against by appropriate provisions in

the Union Naturalization Law calling upon the person concerned to choose one or the other. For this purpose, the clause makes express provision for supplementary legislation terminating citizenship. We recommend that the clause as redrafted by us be adopted.

S. VARADACHARIAR,
TEK CHAND,
B.L. MITTER,
A.KRISHNASWAMI AYYAR,
K.N. KATJU,
B.R. AMBEDKAR,
K.M. MUNSHI.

NOTES SUBMITTED TO THE AD HOC COMMITTEE
NOTE ON CITIZENSHIP CLAUSE BY D.P. KHAITAN

In the definition of citizenship, I think, it should include that a woman on being married to a citizen of India will automatically become such a citizen. I think generally, it is the law in other countries also. But whether that be so or not, on India having been partitioned, I can visualize that there will be a large number of marriages between citizens of India and citizens of Pakistan. It may be argued that the wife may be naturalized. But the point applies to lakhs of people, most of whom would be illiterate and most others will not have the knowledge as to what citizenship implies and the disqualifications attaching to foreigners, and will further be too lazy to undergo the procedure of naturalization. Further, it would apply to lakhs of people at present inhabiting, *for example*, West Bengal, and the wives coming from East Bengal. The point also applies to marriages between citizens of India and citizens of Indian States.

As the law is being drafted at present, it is, in my opinion, necessary that this point be cleared up in order that Hindustan may not be full of, what would legally be, foreign women.

22. Discussion on Issues of Citizenship and Language

Extracts from the Proceedings of the Constituent Assembly, 2 May 1947
Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. III, pp. 526–35.

Mr President: Now there are two clauses that had been referred to a committee of five. We may now take them up one by one. The new clause 3 may now be moved.

Mr K.M. Munshi: I move that the following clause be substituted for the original clause:

‘Every person both in the Union and subject to its jurisdiction, every person either of whose parents was at the time of such person’s birth, a citizen of the Union, and every person naturalised in the Union shall be a citizen of the Union.

Further provision regarding the acquisition and termination of Union citizenship may be made by the law of the Union.’

The reasons have already been given fully in the Report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee. I have nothing to add to it.

Sri K. Santhanam: Sir, I move that the following be added at the end of the first paragraph of this clause:

‘Every person born or naturalised in India before the commencement of the Union and subject to its jurisdiction shall be a citizen of the Union.’

The necessity for this amendment is simply this: You are conferring citizenship on people who are to be born hereafter and on those who are born citizens on the date the Union comes into existence. That means that unless any of us are born within the territories of the Union, we shall not be citizens. I have consulted Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar. This clause only covers the cases of persons who are born citizens on the day the Union comes into existence. Under the Cabinet Mission Plans, Union territories were expected to be co-extensive with the territories within the frontiers of India. In that case my amendment may not be necessary. But there is the possibility that the Union territory will be much smaller than the present territories. Supposing there is a man in the Union born in Sind. According to this definition he will not be a Union citizen. He will become an alien. Do you want that consequence to happen? I want to say that, at the beginning of the Union, anybody who has been born in India and who is subject to the jurisdiction of the Union, shall be a Union citizen. After the Union has come into existence I have no objection to this clause. Therefore it is a fundamental point. I hope it will be fully considered and, either in this form or in some other form, provision will be made to see that those who are citizens of India at the time of the commencement of the Union are treated as citizens and not deprived of citizenship simply because they are born outside territories of the proposed Union.

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: It is not necessary to consider such questions at this stage. We are at present providing for citizenship for people residing in the Union. Nobody can now say what will be the situation when the Constitution is finally drafted. Nobody can now say whether any part of India is going to be separated from the rest. When finality is reached in regard to these matters we can consider what should be the adjustment to be made between the parts if there are to be parts. It is unnecessary to consider it at this stage. I hope the Mover will withdraw his amendment.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar (Madras: General): What about persons born in the Union?

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: You will be considered to have been born in the Union when the Constitution is passed.

The Hon'ble Sri C. Rajagopalachariar (Madras: General): The point to be covered is not a ridiculous or simple thing as has been imagined.

The Union will consist of defined areas. It may not consist of the whole of India, but of certain parts of India only. Let us admit that. Now I will cite a concrete case. Suppose I am born in Mysore. I am a man who was born in Mysore. Mysore does not join the Union. Let us take it like that. Then, I shall not have been born in the Union according to the clause by any process of legal construction which is to be provided for legally. Therefore it is that it is suggested that any person who is born in any part of India at the time of the commencement of the Union shall be deemed, when by long previous residence he becomes subject to the jurisdiction of the Union, to be a citizen.

This is a very substantial question. Probably under this category will come a considerable section of the present population who should automatically be taken to be citizens of the Union as soon as it is formed? It does not depend merely on a process of interpretation or explanation. It has to be definitely provided for. This has to be considered and included.

Mr R.K. Sidhwa: Sir, as stated by Mr Santhanam, if the position is left as it is, this clause will deprive many persons who are born in the Union, which is going to be defined later on,—I

hope it will comprise all parts of India—of their rights of citizenship of the Union. What will be their position? I am born in Sind. Supposing Sind is not going to be part of the Union, what will be my position? Am I to lose my citizenship of the Union? That is a point which has to be considered later on. As I said the other day, citizenship right is a fundamental right. Why should a law hereafter provide for that? The right of citizenship has a first place in the Fundamental Rights. Foreigners who come to India for their own personal interest and gain can make an application for citizenship and can get it immediately, whereas those who are born in India will be under a disadvantage. For the foreigners a period of ten years must be mentioned. If the State is satisfied that after ten years they have their stake in India they can have the right of citizenship. This matter was discussed for a number of hours in this Chamber yesterday. We did not like to treat this matter lightly. We wanted to give this matter very serious consideration and you, Sir, were good enough to impress upon those who differed from us the need for giving this matter sufficient consideration and warned us against ignoring it in view of the fact that every person should have the right to become a citizen of this country. After all, we want to be in the Union. We cannot forget that we are Indians, that we were born here. If India is to be divided into parts, what kind of rules are we going to make for citizenship? I consider, Sir, that those who were born here before the Union should be given full guarantee that they are citizens of the Union and that they would not be deprived of their citizenship.

Then, about naturalization. Any man who comes here from a foreign country for his personal gain, for his personal benefit, has only to say, 'I want to be naturalized' to become a citizen of the Union. I am born in India but I am to be deprived of my citizenship. A foreigner by simply giving a declaration that he wants to become naturalised, gets all the rights of citizenship.

With due deference to the framers of this clause, I do not think this matter has been given due consideration although it has been stated that:

'Further provision regarding the acquisition and termination of Union citizenship may be made by the law of the Union.'

I do not want any law to provide for my citizenship. Therefore, this matter should be discussed here, Sir.

Dewan Bahadur Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar: (Madras: General): I think, Sir, there is some force in Mr Santhanam's argument. We did not, it must be admitted, consider in the Committee this particular question now before the House, but it may not be wise to put in an amendment on the spur of the moment. If a person was a resident of India, and makes the Union his home after the Union comes into existence, in such a case he might get citizenship. The mere accident that he was born in India or British India but not in the Union cannot give him the right of citizenship. We might have to add a further condition to this clause saying that they must make the Union of India their permanent residence.

So far as the term 'born in the Union' is concerned, I do not think there need be any difficulty. Union: there is a geographical concept. It is not a political concept. No man can be born in a political concept. 'Born in the Union' only means 'born in the territories comprising the Union'.

There is certainly some force in the objection raised by Mr Santhanam. We do not want suddenly to disenfranchise any persons, possibly very distinguished people born in a Native State but today permanent residents of British India. Therefore, so far as that particular class is concerned, we might consider an appropriate formula. We may not be in a position to give the right of citizenship to every person born in any part of India. Suppose some of the States keep

out of the Union, we may have to consider whether we should give the rights of citizenship to the people of those States. Therefore, we will carefully consider this aspect and put in an appropriate clause. In the Committee—I am a member of the Committee and Dr Ambedkar is a member—we did not consider this particular complication that might arise. I think we should not push through an amendment on the spur of the moment.

But so far as the general principle is concerned, there cannot be any exception. 'Every person born in the Union and subject to the jurisdiction; every person either of whose parents was, at the time of such person's birth, a citizen of the Union, and every person naturalised in the Union', so far as that part is concerned, there can be no exception. That was considered by the Committee in all its aspects. This particular class of people which Mr Santhanam mentioned will have to be separately dealt with and provided for. On the understanding that this class of people will be provided for, this clause should be passed, or the whole clause might stand over, I have no objection. But so far as the main principle is concerned, we are all agreed and there is absolutely no difference of opinion. It was discussed threadbare by the Committee which was appointed by this House and we unanimously came to the conclusion that this should be adopted.

Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: I do not agree with Sir Alladi. He says that Union means Union territory. The clause says, 'subject to the jurisdiction thereof'. Is it subject to the jurisdiction of the territory or the Government of the territory? Mere territory is not enough. I therefore urge upon the House to remit this clause for the reconsideration of the Expert Committee.

Diwan Bahadur Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar: We may have remittance or re-remittance but I do not think that that Committee can throw any additional light on this. If there is any other class to be provided for, we will provide for them. I am merely answering the suggestion of remittal and all that. I was stating that it was not fair to that Committee to remit. This is a political question and not a legal question. We must come to a conclusion on that point. We were only anxious to get the help of that Committee for the purpose of determining the question whether 'birth' shall be the foundation of nationality or not, and that Committee has given its opinion. We may have any number of commitals and re-commitals, so far as the Committee of this House is concerned. The Committee which considered this consisted of Members of this House and also persons who are not members of this House. Under these circumstances, I would suggest that we have had all the help from people who are not members of this House and from the gentleman who was the President of that Committee. I do not think it will be fair to that Committee to remit it as if they had not considered any particular aspect of the question. It is a new question that has cropped up before the Committee and let us deal with it squarely. And before we next meet, there will be no difficulty in providing so far as that particular class of cases is concerned. This general principle may be passed and the other clause may be brought in later on or the whole thing may stand over. I am not wedded to either one theory or another, but let it be clearly understood that so far as the main principle is concerned, we accept the recommendation of the Committee presided over by a very distinguished lawyer.

The Hon'ble Sri C. Rajagopalachariar: I am sorry, Sir, the discussion has proceeded on lines which create a certain amount of confusion. I wish that attention should be bestowed on one important and entirely non-controversial matter, namely, that there are numerous persons in India today, who will be within the jurisdiction of the Union, however restricted it may be,

however small it may be, who were born in other parts of India and who are now resident within the territories which are going to be in the Union. The formula as it stands today will exclude those large classes of people, not intentionally, but unintentionally. Therefore, the formula has to be corrected. It has to be corrected so as to give automatic citizenship to those large numbers of people who are born in various parts of India, as we today understand it, and who will be old and permanent residents of the areas which will be comprised within the Union. That exclusion would be wholly unintended and wrong. Therefore, the formula has to be revised. I myself believe that it can be revised, if Sir Alladi and Dr Ambedkar sit at it, in the course of 15 minutes; but if it is considered difficult, the whole thing should be remitted, because if we pass a clause like this solemnly in the Constituent Assembly, it cannot be added to afterwards without much ceremonial. I would suggest that it be deferred. Sir Alladi and Dr Ambedkar may meet today, discuss and finish it in a few minutes. If they do not think so, let them take their own time, but it cannot be simply ignored on the ground that it is a small matter. It is too large a matter to be put aside.

Mr K.M. Munshi: Nobody suggests for a moment that this is not an important matter. The Committee did not consider it, but when the original draft was placed this difficulty was present in my mind. But this, as Sir Alladi very rightly said, is not a question of fundamental rights only. It is a question which will have to be decided in future in the setting of the political situation at the time when we finally draft the Constitution. Of course, it is very easy to move an amendment, but we do not know today what is going to be the position of the Union with regard to its territory, whether it is going to be the whole of India, or part of it, or whether some portions are going to be hostile. The second question that has to be considered is whether people born in the Union, who are residing in other parts of India, will have rights as regards citizenship in those territories. An instance was given of Mysore. I will restrict myself to that case. Suppose Mysore stays out of the Union and makes a law like this, that any Indian born in any other part of India, though residing in Mysore for a whole life-time shall not be a citizen. This House will be in a position to consider those intricate problems not merely as a matter of fundamental right but as a question dependent upon the political situation at the time we pass it finally. This fundamental right, as drawn up, is the minimum right, the basic right. The fluctuating situation today is such that you cannot possibly draft any amendment to this clause. Let us, therefore, see the political situation between now and the day when the situation is going to be finally considered. At that time it will be possible to produce a proper formula which will find a place either in the Fundamental Rights or in some other convenient place. It has been said that several fundamental rights are going to be considered hereafter. It has also been said that this is a preliminary draft and any situation arising hereafter will be considered. I, therefore, submit that we should take the clause as it is, and with regard to the amendment of Mr Santhanam, it should be referred to the Advisory Committee together with the other amendments which are going to be referred, so that a proper aspect of the question may be brought before the House again.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar (Bombay: General): Mr President, Sir, I think there can be no doubt that the point raised by Mr Santhanam is a point of great importance and we have to take this matter seriously. The difficulty that has arisen will be seen easily if one reads the very first sentence of the clause as drafted by the Committee. The draft says, 'every person born in the Union'. Obviously that has reference to future, those who will be born in the Union after the Union is formed. The question is this. What is going to be the position of people who are born in India,

but who are born before the Union has come into being? In my judgment, in order to cover that case, we shall have to introduce another clause. I am not suggesting an amendment, I am putting forth an idea. The new clause shall have to be something like this:

‘All persons born in India, as defined in the General Clauses Act and who are residing in the Union and subject to the jurisdiction of the Union shall be citizens of the Union.’

I think that a clause somewhat on these lines is necessary and it will cover the case of people who are born in India, who will be the subjects of the Union, when the Union comes into being. Without this clause, large numbers of people will be denationalised. They will have no nationality at all. I, therefore, suggest that it may be as well to send the whole clause back for further consideration.

Mr President: A suggestion has been made that the whole clause be held over for further consideration.

Mr R.K. Sidhwa: This is not a matter for lawyers only. This question has a bearing on every ordinary person.

Mr President: The Advisory Committee will be free to consider it, and if it so feels, it can put forward any suggestions at the next sitting.

Do I take it that the House agrees that this clause be held over for further consideration?

Many Hon’ble Members: Yes.

Mr President: It is held over....

PRESIDENT’S REMARKS REGARDING THE RESOLUTIONS RELATING TO LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL PROVINCES AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE CONSTITUTION TO BE FRAMED.

Mr President: There are one or two matters to which I should like to make a reference. Hon’ble Members will recollect that notice was given of Resolutions regarding the formation of linguistic and cultural provinces by several Members in the last Session of the Assembly and those Resolutions were held over and it was expected that they would be taken up in this Session. But as we have already under Resolution of this House decided to constitute two Committees, one for drawing up the principles of the Union Constitution and another for drawing up a model Constitution for the provinces, I announced the other day that those Committees would take into consideration those Resolutions also. I take it that that would be done and nothing further need be done now regarding those Resolutions.

Then there is one other matter about which I have been feeling a bit worried and I wish to share that worry with the House—not that I expect any answer to it just now but I would like the Members to take that into consideration. All our proceedings are being conducted in English because there are many Members who are not acquainted with the national language and so the drafts also are being prepared in the English language. In the drafts there are many expressions used which may be called terms of art, that is to say, technical language, taken from some constitution or other. Some of these constitutions have been subjected to legal interpretations, and by using that language we are in a way attracting the operation of those interpretations also to our constitution. In future—I do not say immediately, but in the future—a time may come when we shall probably cease to depend upon English as our language, and if the Constitution is passed today in the English language, then that remains the original constitution and any question of interpretation will have to be with reference to

the language used in that constitution as it is passed today. The question arises whether we shall continue for ever in future to interpret our Constitution in English language and whether we shall expect our judges in future always to be acquainted with English language so that they might interpret our Constitution in the future. If the Constitution is passed in the English language, I suppose that will be the natural consequence. It is difficult at the present moment to make a suggestion which will resolve this difficulty. I was wondering whether we could have a translation made of this Constitution as it is drafted as soon as it is possible, and ultimately adopt that as our original Constitution. (*Cheers*). In case of any ambiguity or any difficulty arising as to interpretation, the English copy will also be available for reference, but I would personally like that the original should be in our main language and not in English language, (*Loud Cheers*), so that our future judges may have to depend upon our own language and not on a foreign language. (*Cheers*).

As I said, I do not expect an answer to a question like this, but I would like Members to take this matter into consideration, and in the meantime, if I have your permission, I shall try to get the Constitution as it is drafted translated into our language as soon as possible. I realize the difficulty of putting it in a form in which it will have the same interpretation, because appropriate terms of art will not be found in our language and we have naturally to add clauses which will explain those expressions of art. But if I have your permission, we might make an attempt. I am afraid our present staff, the staff we have got for translating these things, is not adequate for this purpose and we shall have to take the help of persons who are really persons of a very high order and who can do that. I do not know if it will be possible for me to do it, but if I have your leave, I might attempt it. I thought I might bring this to your notice for your consideration because, if this Constitution is going to be a Constitution which is expected to last, at any rate, for some time, then we cannot expect to have it in a language which is not our language. We must provide for a time when we shall have to depend on our own language, and that, at a not very distant date. Therefore I have brought this to the notice of the House so that Members might also take this into consideration and offer their suggestions, if not today, at least at a later stage before we have actually finalized our Constitution.

(Some Members at this stage rose to speak.)

Mr President: I did not expect any discussion on this. I simply expressed what I was feeling and I expect this thing would be taken into consideration at a later stage.

There is one other matter.

Shri Vishwambhar Dayal Tripathi (United Provinces: General): In this connection I have to....

The Hon'ble Mr B.G. Kher (Bombay: General): On a point of order, Sir. This is discussing.

Mr President: Anyway, let him finish.

Shri Vishwambhar Dayal Tripathi: I do not wish to say any thing in this connection. But rules provide that all the proceedings of the Assembly, for example, agenda, and other things, will be supplied to Members in Hindustani. True, there are difficulties. Nevertheless it is very important. I would request that some arrangements should positively be made for this in future.

Mr President: Yes. I tell you why this could not be done. Our Hindustani staff was not yet complete but arrangements are being made and I think it should be possible to arrange for it at an early date.

Shri Balkrishna Sharma (United Provinces: General): Without in any way going against the orders which have already been given in regard to the subject, may I just know whether the arrangement that is going to be made for the translation of the Constitution in our language will be in Hindi, Urdu or will be in a language which will be a conglomeration of both?

Mr President: It will be in a language which will be intelligible. (*Laughter*).

Mr President: Then, one other matter which I think we have to decide, *that is*, the next session of the Assembly. At the last session the House passed a Resolution fixing the month of April for this meeting. I would suggest that instead of fixing any date or even a month the House should leave it to me to fix the time of the next meeting.

Hon'ble Members: Yes.

Mr President: I can give this undertaking that I shall do it as soon as I feel that we have got material ready for the meeting.

Sri K. Santhanam: I suggest, Sir, that a formal motion to this effect may be moved.

Mr President: That is what I am also suggesting. A formal motion may be moved.

Shri Vishwambhar Dayal Tripathi: In this connection, I would like to add....

Mr President: Let this be over.

Mr Satyanarayan Sinha: Mr President, Sir, I move that this Constituent Assembly do adjourn till such date as the President may fix.

Mr President: The motion is that the Constituent Assembly do adjourn till such date as the President may fix. Do I take it that the House accepts the proposition?

The motion was adopted.

Mr R.K. Sidhwa: I wish to make one request. That is, now that the date has been left to you, Sir, will you kindly see that the agenda is supplied to us in sufficient time at our residence, so that we may study it?

Mr President: I have told you at the very beginning that I will fix the time when I have got the material ready for discussion.

(To Mr Tripathi), You wanted to say something.

Shri Vishwambhar Dayal Tripathi: I have only to repeat what Mr Sidhwa has said before you and nothing else.

Mr President: I think we have now finished our work. So the House now stands adjourned till such time as I may fix.

The Constituent Assembly then adjourned till such time as the President might fix.



23. Socialist Party Members to Join the Constituent Assembly if Invited

Letter from Jayaprakash Narayan to Jawaharlal Nehru, 3 May 1947

Bimal Prasad (Ed.), *Jayaprakash Narayan: Selected Works*, Vol. IV, p. 140.

My dear Bhai,

As you are very busy I have not thought it proper to take your time.

I am writing to inform you that the National Executive of the Socialist Party has now allowed, in the changed circumstances, its members to join the Constituent Assembly if invited to do so. If it is proposed to take some members from our group to fill up the vacancies that are to be created, I should like to recommend the following names: Acharya Narendra Deva, Aruna Asaf Ali, Rammanohar Lohia, Purushottam Trikamdas, Kamaladevi, Rao Patwardhan, Asoka Mehta, among others. Achyut is not in India, but if he comes back in time, he too should be included.

I should like my name to be left out. I am saying this not out of modesty, but I do not have the time to attend to fresh tasks nor have I the aptitude for this kind of work.

I have hesitated to write this letter, for it goes against my grain to ask for things. Had I to write to somebody else, I am sure the letter would have been unwritten.

With love and regards,

Yours,

Jayaprakash

24. No Interference in Socio-religious Institutions of Jains

Extracts from the Memorandum to the Minorities Sub-committee by the Jain Swetambar Conference, 7 May 1947

B. Shiva Rao (Ed.), *Framing of India's Constitution*, Vol. II, pp. 383-4.

... 2. The Working Committee of the All India Jain Swetambar Conference at their meeting held in Bombay on the 21st March 1947 considered the position of the Jains in the political life of the country and the question whether any safeguards were necessary to be provided in the constitutions of the Union and the Provinces which are being forged by the Constituent Assembly with great desire to treat all the communities in the country with justice and equity and fair play, to protect the interests of the Jain community and passed a resolution that a representation should be made to the Constituent Assembly for that purpose and authorized us to make this representation. In accordance with the resolution and in conformity with the discussion and opinions expressed at the meeting we beg to submit this memorial for the consideration of the Constituent Assembly.

3. Though the Jains are racially Hindus and have their culture which is very much common with the Hindus, their religious philosophy, belief, customs and practices have considerably influenced their thought, their actions and their mode of life; and this influence has been so marked that they have been recognized as a distinct community and their culture also as distinct from others.

4. Their world famous temples on Shatrunjaya and Girnar in Kathiawar, at Dilwara on Mount Abu and on Sametsikhar or Paraspath Hills in Bihar and their other places of pilgrimage all over the country and particularly in Bihar, Kathiawar, Gujarat and in Central and Southern India, their ancient libraries (*Pustak Bhandars*), their literature both religious and secular, their

religious orders, their religious and socio-religious institutions, their trusts and their charitable institutions are a rich and priceless heritage which they cherish and desire to preserve. They desire that in the management and administration of these institutions there should be no interference of other persons who do not understand their sentiments and susceptibilities and the ideas and ideals behind them. Your Honour will appreciate that this desire of the Jains is just and proper and reasonable.

5. In the interests of the unity of the country which is of supreme importance and especially so at the present critical moment of the country's destiny, the Jains have decided not to ask for any separate representation in the legislative, executive or administrative institutions of the country nor to claim any separate political rights for them. They have thrown their lot with the other Hindus and have decided to stand together and work together and co-operate with all other communities in the country for the common good of all. The Jains have made their contribution and a very valuable contribution too in the country's life; and they do want to serve the country for the common good. But they often feel that their interests have been neglected or over-looked and that they have suffered by reason of their having no influence and effective voice in the governance of the country. This feeling has at times tempted them to ask for and claim a separate representation. But at this supreme moment of the country's destiny they do not desire to strike a discordant note. They hope that by their industry, ability and service they will occupy their proper place in the political, social and economic life of the country and enjoy their proper share in the common good. However there is a common feeling in the community that there should be no interference by others in their religious or socio-religious institutions as stated above.

6. We may here cite some instances where such interferences were either made or sought to be made. In Bihar, during the regime of the popular Ministry in 1938 a Bill called 'Bihar Hindu Religious Endowments Bill' was introduced with the object of preventing mismanagement of the Hindu temples and *maths* and other charitable institutions in Bihar. It was also made applicable to the Jain temples and other institutions. When we examined the Bill it was found that there were many clauses in the Bill which went beyond the said object. There were provisions for the appointment of a committee by the Government with powers to make and sanction budgets for the administration of the temples and institutions covered by the Bill. This surely was an interference which the Jains resented. Besides, on the committee consisting of about twelve members there was only one seat provided for the Jains. Your Honour will appreciate that such a committee consisting mostly of persons who are not Jains cannot understand the religious sentiments and the ideas and ideals behind the various institutions so as to make or sanction a proper budget. Our Working Committee had made a representation to the Bihar Government and had also joined in an All India deputation which had an interview with the Prime Minister and other Ministers concerned at Ranchi. Thereafter as the ministry resigned, the Bill was dropped. The Jains however apprehend that in future some such legislation may be introduced.

7. In Bombay an Act popularly called the Beggars Act was passed about year ago. In the said Act the definition of the term 'beggar' is made so wide that some of us were of the opinion that it would cover a Jain *Sadhu*. Our Working Committee thereupon made a representation to the Government seeking to expressly make an exception in case of a Jain *Sadhu* whose activity for collecting his food it was not and it could not be the intention of the legislature to prevent. The Government replied that they had instructed the police not to interfere with the

Jain *Sadhu* going about to collect his food. However the Government was not pleased to grant even such a reasonable and just request to provide for a legislative exemption in favour of a Jain *Sadhu*. Now the position of the Jain *Sadhu* in respect of the provisions of the said Act is precarious. He has to depend upon the mercy of the executive.

8. These instances have caused grave apprehension in the mind of the Jain community that in future legislation there may be such interferences with their institutions.

9. We have therefore to request Your Honour to consider this matter in the Constituent Assembly and to make suitable provision in the declaration of fundamental rights in the Union or Provincial constitutions either generally or specially granting protection to the Jain community against such interferences in future. We submit that no law interfering with the management or administration of the Jain temples and places of pilgrimage, their religious orders of *Sadhus* and *Sadhvis*, their literature and *Pustak Bhandars*, their trusts and other religious and charitable institutions, their art and architecture, should be enacted which has not the approval of the community.

Chapter 14. Interim Government

1. Gandhi's Plan: Jinnah to Form Government

Louis Mountbatten's Note on His Meeting with M.K. Gandhi, 1 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML.

TOP SECRET

Mr Gandhi asked if he might take a walk round the Viceroy's garden at 9 o'clock, which he did accompanied by Rajkumari Amrit Kaur. Her Excellency went to meet him and accompanied him for part of the walk.

I met him at 9.30 as arranged, and we drew up chairs in the garden and continued our conversations.

He gave me his views on the origin of Hindu-Muslim animosity, and though he did not hold the British responsible for its origin, he said their policy of 'Divide and Rule' had kept the tension very much alive, and that I should now reap what my predecessors had deliberately sown.

He urged me whatever happened to have the courage to see the truth and act by it, even though the correct solution might mean grievous loss of life on our departure on an unprecedented scale.

Finally, he gave me the first brief summary of the solution which he wishes me to adopt:

Mr Jinnah should forthwith be invited to form the Central Interim Government with members of the Muslim League. This Government to operate under the Viceroy in the way the present Interim Government is operating. Any difficulty experienced through Congress having a majority in the Assembly to be overcome by their able advocacy of the measures they wished to introduce.

I need not say that this solution coming at this time staggered me. I asked 'What would Mr Jinnah say to such a proposal?' The reply was 'If you tell him I am the author he will reply "Wily Gandhi".' I then remarked 'And I presume Mr Jinnah will be right?' To which he replied with great fervour 'No, I am entirely sincere in my suggestion.'

At this moment the ADC reported that the Tibetan Mission had arrived, and our conversation therefore had to be terminated until the following day.

I did however obtain Mr Gandhi's permission to discuss the matter with Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad, in strict confidence, the next time they came to see me.

M.

Addendum

During the course of the discussion Mr Gandhi gave it as his considered opinion as a student of history and of world politics that never before, in any case of history he had read about in

recent or past times, had so difficult or responsible a task been imposed on any one man as that which now faced me. I thanked him sincerely for realizing the position in which I was placed.

M.

2. Maulana Azad on Gandhi's Offer to Jinnah to Form Government

Record of Louis Mountbatten's Interview with Maulana Azad, 2 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML.

TOP SECRET

The meeting lasted from 5 to 5.45 p.m. I introduced him to Mr Campbell-Johnson.

I told him straight away of Gandhi's plan, of which he already knew from Gandhi that morning.

He staggered me by saying that in his opinion it was perfectly feasible of being carried out, since Gandhi could unquestionably influence the whole of Congress to accept it and work it loyally. He further thought that there was a chance I might get Jinnah to accept it, and he thought that such a plan would be the quickest way to stop bloodshed, and the simplest way of turning over power.

When questioned categorically whether he preferred Gandhi's plan to the Cabinet Mission plan, he had to admit that if a whole-hearted acceptance by all parties of the Cabinet Mission plan came about, this would be preferable to the Gandhi plan.

I mentioned the other alternative which I had put to Mr Gandhi an hour before, and he thought this also a very good alternative.

In fact Maulana Azad said that the sooner a decision could be taken and implemented, and the longer I could remain at the Centre to get things straightened out and running smoothly before I left, the better for the future of India.

I invited him to criticize my method of handling the Cabinet, and he was so complimentary that I had to accuse him of gross flattery and begged him to give me sincere constructive criticism. He replied he was absolutely sincere, and that he was certain that that view was shared by every Member of the Cabinet.

(*Note.* I realize that every Member of my Cabinet is probably out to ingratiate himself and his party, and that this form of flattery is to be expected at this stage.)

3. Jinnah to Be First Given the Option of Forming a Cabinet

Outline of a Draft Agreement by M.K. Gandhi as Dictated to H.L. Ismay, 4 April 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 199–200.

1. Mr Jinnah to be given the option of forming a Cabinet.
2. The selection of the Cabinet is left entirely to Mr Jinnah. The members may be all Muslims, or all non-Muslims, or they may be representatives of all classes and creeds of the Indian people.
3. If Mr Jinnah accepted this offer, the Congress would guarantee to co-operate freely and sincerely, so long as all the measures that Mr Jinnah's Cabinet bring forward are in the interests of the Indian people as a whole.

4. The sole referee of what is or is not in the interests of India as a whole will be Lord Mountbatten, in his personal capacity.
5. Mr Jinnah must stipulate, on behalf of the League or of any other parties represented in the Cabinet formed by him that, so far as he or they are concerned, they will do their utmost to preserve peace throughout India.
6. There shall be no National Guards or any other form of private army.
7. Within the framework hereof Mr Jinnah will be perfectly free to present for acceptance a scheme of Pakistan even before the transfer of power, provided however, that he is successful in his appeal to reason and not to the force of arms which he abjures for all time for this purpose. Thus, there will be no compulsion in this matter over a province or a part thereof.
8. In the Assembly the Congress has a decisive majority. But the Congress shall never use that majority against the League policy simply because of its identification with the League but will give its hearty support to every measure brought forward by the League Government, provided that it is in the interest of the whole of India. Whether it is in such interest or not shall be decided by Lord Mountbatten as man and not in his representative capacity.
9. If Mr Jinnah rejects this offer, the same offer to be made *mutatis mutandis* to Congress.

4. Gandhi's Scheme Impractical

Extract from a Note by V.P. Menon, Undated (c. 4 April 1947)
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML.

Gandhi is not being quite fair to HE when he puts forward his proposal that the selection of the Cabinet for an Interim Government should be left entirely to Jinnah. He knows full well that similar offers have been made by him in the past and that Jinnah never took them seriously....

5. There is no reason to suppose that Jinnah will now accept an offer which he has rejected previously. If he forms a Government composed entirely of Muslim League nominees, that Government will find itself facing a predominant Congress majority in the Central Legislature from which Jinnah has to get his essential legislation and supply. On the other hand, if there is a coalition, it will have to be formed on conditions more acceptable to the Congress than to the League. In either event, the assurance of co-operation by the Congress is more a wishful thinking and would certainly place Jinnah in the position of having to adjust his views to those of the Congress. This is perhaps not unintended by Gandhi. In a Legislature where the Congress has got predominant representation, the question whether a 'particular proposal is in the interests of the Indian people' will in practice be decided by that party. The fact that HE as the arbitrator has decided on a particular course of action will not help Jinnah either with the Legislature or with the public....

7. According to Gandhi's proposal, Jinnah is at liberty to plan for Pakistan and even to put his plans into effect provided that he is successful in appealing to reason and does not use force. This is asking for the impossible. If Jinnah could persuade the Sikhs and Hindus of the Punjab and Hindus of Bengal to join Pakistan, he would automatically get his Pakistan without joining the Interim Government on dubious terms. On the other hand, if Jinnah still persists in

his scheme of separation, he will be giving his case away by entering the Central Government. This was the main motive which induced him to keep out of the Central Government in the past and, as a matter of fact, he has never attached any importance to effective participation on the side of the Muslim League in the present Interim Government.

8. It is Gandhi's habit to make propositions, leaving many of their implications unsaid, and this method of negotiation has put him and the Congress in difficult positions in the past. For example, there is no reference here to the Muslim League participation in the Constituent Assembly. If Jinnah were to accept his proposal, Gandhi probably takes it for granted that the Muslim League would enter the Constituent Assembly. It seems to me clear therefore that the present proposals do not expose his full mind.

9. Since the Cabinet Delegation's visit last year, Gandhi is out of accord with the policy of the Congress Working Committee as well as the members of the Interim Government on several questions of major importance. It should not therefore be taken for granted that his present proposals will carry the support of either the Congress Working Committee or of Nehru and Patel.

10. It is suggested that if Jinnah rejects the offer the same offer is to be made *mutatis mutandis* to the Congress. It should be borne in mind that all the factors which have been mentioned as working to the disadvantage of Jinnah will for the same reason work to the advantage of the Congress. HE's main task is to find a solution to the present deadlock between the League and the Congress. It is no solution to suggest that power should be transferred to the Congress to the exclusion of the Muslim League. If the proposition were as simple as that, it would have been solved long ago.

5. Gandhi Amends Draft Outline of Plan

Letter from M.K. Gandhi to H.L. Ismay, 5 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 82A, NMML.

Dear Lord Ismay,

Pandit Nehru gave me what you have described as an outline of a scheme. What I read is merely a copy of the points I hurriedly dictated whereas, as I understood from HE the Viceroy, you were to prepare a draft agreement after the line of the points I had dictated. Of course, you were at liberty to amend them, add to them and omit what you wished to omit.

I had a chat with Pandit Nehru twice during the day, the second time when he handed a copy of the outline at 5 p.m.

The 7th point should read thus:

'Within the framework hereof Mr Jinnah will be perfectly free to present for acceptance a scheme of Pakistan, even before the transfer of power, provided however, that he is successful in his appeal to reason and not to the force of arms which he abjures for all time for this purpose. Thus, there will be no compulsion in this matter over a Province or part thereof.'

What I could not recall yesterday I now recall. The 8th will read as follows:

'In the Assembly the Congress has a decisive majority. But the Congress shall never use that majority against the League policy simply because of its identification with the League but will give its hearty support to every measure brought forward by the League Government, provided that it is in the interest of the whole of India. Whether it is in such interest or not shall be decided by Lord Mountbatten as man and not in his representative capacity.'

I have finished dictating this at 8.45 p.m. I am anxious that it reaches you tonight. Therefore, I have only made manifest correction and addition. The outline is by no means complete. When a draft agreement is prepared, many other points which should occur to any draftsman will have to be covered.

I must add that Pandit Nehru has at least one vital objection to the outline. But I will not tax you with its mention here. If the outline appears workable to HE I would like to wait on him once more and discuss Pandit Nehru's objections. Before putting it before Jinnah I would like to show it to a few friends.

Yours sincerely,
M.K. GANDHI

6. Officials Consider Gandhi's Scheme Unworkable

Minutes of the Viceroy's Ninth Staff Meeting, 5 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 200A, NMML.

TOP SECRET

Those present during this discussion which took place at the end of The Viceroy's Ninth Staff Meeting held at The Viceroy's House, New Delhi on 5 April 1947 at 10 am were: Rear-Admiral Viscount Mountbatten of Burma, Lord Ismay, Sir E. Mievile, Mr Abell, Captain Brockman, Mr Campbell-Johnson, Lieutenant-Colonel Erskine Crum

LORD ISMAY said that he had spent an hour with Mr Gandhi the previous day after the latter's interview with the Viceroy. He had reduced to writing an outline of Mr Gandhi's scheme for an Interim Government pending the transfer of power. The salient features of this scheme were that Mr Jinnah was to be given the option of forming a Cabinet of his own selection; and that if he rejected this offer, the same offer should be made *mutatis mutandis* to Congress. LORD ISMAY said that he had sent copies of this outline to Sir Eric Mievile, Mr Abell and Rao Bahadur Menon, and after a meeting with them on the subject, Rao Bahadur Menon had rendered a note containing criticism of the scheme. It was clear that Mr Gandhi's plan was not a new one. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY pointed out that Mr Gandhi had made no attempt to disguise this fact.

LORD ISMAY said that, after their talk the previous evening, he, Sir Eric Mievile, Mr Abell and Rao Bahadur Menon had come to the unanimous conclusion that Mr Gandhi's scheme was not workable. It would put the Viceroy in an impossible position; Mr Jinnah's Government would be completely at the mercy of the Congress majority; every single legislative or political measure would be brought up to the Viceroy for decision and every action the Viceroy took after the initial stages would be misrepresented. LORD ISMAY pointed out in support of this belief that Mr Gandhi the previous day had accused Sir Evan Jenkins of responsibility for the present situation in the Punjab; Sir Olaf Caroe of responsibility for the present North-West Frontier troubles; Sir Francis Mudie of excessive support of the Muslim League Government in Sind; and the whole Civil Service and Indian Political Service of all manner of sins, including corruption....

LORD ISMAY said that Mr Gandhi's proposition had already been put up to Mr Jinnah who had rejected it and would do so again. He wondered whether Mr Gandhi would now take any further steps on the scheme outside.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that Mr Gandhi's scheme was undoubtedly wild except for the fact of Mr Gandhi's amazing personal influence which might induce Congress to accept it. A main danger in his opinion was that Mr Gandhi might die—then the scheme would completely break down. He had made it quite clear to Mr Gandhi, during one of their talks, that he was not going to be a party to any manoeuvre whereby he would make an offer to Mr Jinnah which the latter was likely to refuse. Mr Gandhi had quite sincerely stated that he would prefer Mr Jinnah to form a Government, but had insisted on the inclusion of the clause that if Mr Jinnah rejected the offer it must thereafter be made to Congress.

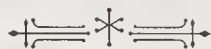
HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he had told Mr Gandhi that he intended to formulate all conceivable workable alternative plans for the future of India, talk over them all with the different Indian leaders and finally discuss them at the projected meeting at Simla. He intended to inform Mr Jinnah of Mr Gandhi's scheme, and all the other alternatives, at an early stage so that he could discuss it with the other leading Muslim League personalities before the Simla house party. He felt that Mr Jinnah should be told all the possible plans and that there should be no manoeuvring....

LORD ISMAY, SIR ERIC MIEVILLE and MR. ABELL all agreed that it was desirable that the Indian leaders should not be asked to give their written acceptance of the selected plan. MR. ABELL pointed out that, if Mr Gandhi went to Congress with his offer, it would put the Muslim League in a very awkward position. Therefore, he did not consider that Mr Gandhi's scheme should be ranked as a possible solution.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that, nevertheless, it would serve to remain as a frightening alternative to Mr Jinnah. It would not be very easy for Mr Jinnah to refuse Mr Gandhi's offer. Basically, Mr Gandhi's object was to retain the unity of India and basically he was right in this. Mr Gandhi honestly considered that the only hope of unity came from Coalition Government. He thought that the present Coalition Government was functioning very creakily. He felt that the Muslims' fear must be removed before it could be made to work better. Once the British had handed over to a unified India, Mr Gandhi doubtless thought that the Indians themselves would be able to adjust matters and set up some sort of Pakistan, if necessary. Mr Gandhi's viewpoint was that, since it was impossible to get Mr Jinnah to agree to Congress running the Interim Government, the only way was to get Mr Jinnah to run it himself and for him (Mr Gandhi) to use his great influence to induce Congress to accept that....

SIR ERIC MIEVILLE reverted to the point that there was a possibility of Mr Gandhi, putting up his scheme prematurely to Congress and possibly passing a resolution on it through the Congress Working Committee. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he would talk about this with Pandit Nehru that day. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY:

- (i) invited C.V.S. and Pers. Sec. to prepare an appreciation on the various possible solutions;
- (ii) directed Pers. Sec. to include in his next letter to the Secretary of State an outline of his present thoughts on the future timetable;
- (iii) decided to talk to Pandit Nehru that afternoon about Mr Gandhi's scheme.



7. Speculation on Gandhi's Scheme

Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and V.K. Krishna Menon, 5 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML.

TOP SECRET

Mr Menon, whom I saw twice in London before coming out, came to see me at 12.15 and stayed to lunch at 1.15.

I asked him categorically whether Mr Gandhi's scheme of turning over the Central Government to Mr Jinnah could be made to work.

Mr Menon replied emphatically, but with due consideration for Mr Gandhi, that he was afraid that not even Mr Gandhi could put this particular scheme through; even if Mr Jinnah could be made to accept it.

8. A Revised Copy of the Draft Outline of Gandhi's Scheme

Letter from H.L. Ismay to M.K. Gandhi, 6 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 82A, NMML.

Dear Mr Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of 5th April. It was very kind of you to dictate it at such a late hour in order that it might reach me last night.

I think that there has been some misunderstanding about the form of the short note which I prepared last Friday. As I understood it, Lord Mountbatten, on the conclusion of his talk with you, asked if you would be so good as to spare a little more time for a talk with me about your plan, in order that I might prepare a short note summarizing its salient features in general terms. He had no intention, so far as I knew, that I should attempt anything formal or elaborate. I have now shown him your letter and he confirms that my interpretation of his wishes was correct.

I have prepared a revised copy of my note substituting your version of point 7 for the original and including your point 8. This covers much the same ground as my original points 3 and 4, which therefore now become redundant.

Lord Mountbatten has asked me to say that he much looks forward to having another talk with you about your plan before you leave.

May I conclude with an expression of my personal thanks for having spared me so much of your time last Friday.

Yours sincerely,
ISMAY

P.S.: The Viceroy assures you that he will not mention your plan to Mr Jinnah until he has had a further talk about it with you.

OUTLINE OF A SCHEME FOR AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT PENDING TRANSFER OF POWER

1. Mr Jinnah to be given the option of forming a Cabinet.
2. The selection of the Cabinet is left entirely to Mr Jinnah. The members may be all Moslems, or all non-Moslems, or they may be representatives of all classes and creeds of the Indian people.

3. If Mr Jinnah accepted this offer, the Congress would guarantee to co-operate freely and sincerely, so long as all the measures that Mr Jinnah's Cabinet bring forward are in the interests of the Indian people as a whole.
4. The sole referee of what is or is not in the interests of India as a whole will be Lord Mountbatten, in his personal capacity.
5. Mr Jinnah must stipulate, on behalf of the League or of any other parties represented in the Cabinet formed by him that, so far as he or they are concerned, they will do their utmost to preserve peace throughout India.
6. There shall be no National Guards or any other form of private army.
7. Within the framework hereof Mr Jinnah will be perfectly free to present for acceptance a scheme of Pakistan, even before the transfer of power, provided, however, that he is successful in his appeal to reason and not to the force of arms which he abjures for all time for this purpose. Thus, there will be no compulsion in this matter over a Province or part thereof.
8. In the Assembly the Congress has a decisive majority. But the Congress shall never use that majority against the League policy simply because of its identification with the League, but will give its hearty support to every measure brought forward by the League Government, provided that it is in the interest of the whole of India. Whether it is in such interest or not shall be decided by Lord Mountbatten as a man and not in his representative capacity.
9. If Mr Jinnah rejects this offer, the same offer to be made *mutatis mutandis* to Congress.

9. Mountbatten Clarifies His Position on Gandhi's Scheme

Letter from Louis Mountbatten to M.K. Gandhi, 7 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 82A, NMML.

Ismay has shown me your letter to him of 6th April, and we both are most upset to think that any act, or omission, on our part should in any way increase the great burden you are bearing. I therefore think it right to send you the following personal explanation.

As we were parting last Friday afternoon, I said that your plan had many attractions for me and I asked you if you would be so good as to explain it to Ismay, who had not been present when you first propounded it. On your agreeing to do so, I asked Ismay to make a note of its salient features, and I authorized him to talk it over in confidence with the Reforms Commissioner. I am extremely sorry if by these observations I gave you the impression that I wished your plan reduced to the terms of a formal agreement.

As I explained to you during the many talks that we have enjoyed, my aim has been and is to keep a perfectly open mind until I have had the advantages of discussions with important Indian' political leaders with the object of seeking an agreement between all parties so that peace can be restored in the country and an acceptable basis for the transfer of power be worked out. When these preliminary conversations have been completed, I shall then have to make up my mind as to what I am going to recommend to His Majesty's Government and, before I do so, I shall most certainly take advantage of your kind offer of further discussion with you.



10. Nehru on Gandhi's Offer to Jinnah and Other Political Solutions

Extract from Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Jawaharlal Nehru, 8 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML.

TOP SECRET

The meeting lasted from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Lord Ismay showed him his correspondence with Mr Gandhi and explained the present position about the Gandhi plan. I asked Pandit Nehru to convey to Mr Gandhi a message explaining that I could not yet say anything further about the Plan since I was still busy getting background information.

We then discussed with Pandit Nehru what his solution would be for the transfer of power. He thought that it would not be right to impose any form of constitutional conditions on any community that had a majority in any specific area. Thus, if we were to demit Province by Province, he felt they should have the right to decide whether to join a Hindustan Group, a Pakistan Group, or possibly even remain completely independent. He added that of course before such a thing were done the Punjab and Bengal would have to be split into separate Provinces.

In reply to a question about how to obtain the real views of the people of the N.W.F.P. on which Group they wished to join he suggested that a fresh election should be held after a statement had been made.

The whole thing revolved round having a strong Centre, certainly to begin with, and for that reason Pandit Nehru would favour making a statement soon and transferring power to Provinces while there was still time for me to be in charge at the Centre to help in the early stages of negotiations at the Centre.

He agreed that a formula would have to be found which would prevent the Congress Party from being able to impose their will upon the Army by majority vote, if the Army were kept as a single Service under the Centre.

We also discussed the question of the States, and came to the provisional conclusion that Pakistan should be encouraged to set up their own Constituent Assembly, and the States should choose into which Constituent Assembly they would come.

Nehru thought that the only way the Gandhi plan could be made use of was by offering the premiership of the Interim Government to Jinnah, with the object of strengthening the central authority until the handing over of power in June 1948.

11. Gandhi Withdraws His Plan

Letter from M.K. Gandhi to Louis Mountbatten, 11 April 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 254–5.

Dear Friend,

I had several short talks with Pandit Nehru and an hour's talk with him alone, and then with several members of the Congress Working Committee last night, about the formula I had sketched before you and which I had filled in for them with all the implications. I am sorry to say that I failed to carry any of them with me except Badshah Khan.

I do not know that, having failed to carry both the head and heart of Pandit Nehru with me, I would have wanted to carry the matter further. But Panditji was so good that he would not

be satisfied until the whole plan was discussed with the few members of the Congress Working Committee who were present. I felt sorry that I could not convince them of the correctness of my plan from every point of view. Nor could they dislodge me from my position although I had not closed my mind against every argument. Thus, I have to ask you to omit me from your consideration. Congressmen, who are in the Interim Government are stalwarts, seasoned servants of the nation and, therefore so far as the Congress point of view is concerned, they will be complete advisers.

I would still love to take the place that the late C.F. Andrews took. He represented no one but himself. And, if you ever need my service on its merits, it will be always at your disposal.

In the circumstances above mentioned, subject to your consent, I propose, if possible, to leave tomorrow for Patna.

I have not forgotten the book about tribal expeditions. I have not yet been able to lay my hands on it, for I cannot recall the name of the author nor the year in which I read the book. As I told you, it was years ago in South Africa that I came across it. My search will continue wherever I am and as soon as I trace the book, it shall be sent to you.

I must confess a slip of memory I am answerable for in the course of our talks. I was wrong in connecting Sir Francis Mudie with the late Pandit Nehru. The incident I referred to was in connection with 'Muddiman', not 'Mudie'. The charge, almost universally believed by Congressmen against the present Governor of Sind, remains unaltered, in spite of my slip of memory.

I hope these constant interviews are not proving an unbearable strain.

Yours sincerely,
M.K. Gandhi

12. Gandhi and Mountbatten's Discussions on Political Situation

Note of Louis Mountbatten's Interview with M.K. Gandhi, 12 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 192, NMML.

TOP SECRET

The meeting lasted from 11.45 a.m. to 1.45 p.m.

I thanked him for the letter he had sent me the previous day saying that he had been unable to get his great plan for a Jinnah government through responsible members of Congress, and had therefore had to withdraw it. He regretted his failure very much, but said he thought I could still go ahead on the plan myself if I ardently believed in it.

I told him that however much I believed in it I couldn't possibly go ahead and with success in a matter in which he had already failed himself with the Congress.

I then told him I wanted to report to him in strict confidence all my conversations with Mr Jinnah, to put him in the picture.

I then said that although my mind was still open I was now particularly studying two alternative solutions: (a) the Cabinet Mission plan; (b) a truncated Pakistan. I asked him how much he personally favoured a united India, and of course he said he was extremely anxious for it. I asked him how far he thought Congress would go towards accepting the Cabinet Mission plan, and warned him that Mr Jinnah was bitterly opposed to the Cabinet Mission plan and therefore Congress would have to go at least as far as Mr Jinnah wanted before he would even consider it.

Mr Gandhi said that the whole bone of contention was the interpretation of the meaning of the Cabinet Mission plan, and he suggested that I should call in the High Court to interpret it. I told him that the differences of opinion had already been resolved by the statement of the Cabinet of the 6th December; but he held that the people who drafted the statement were not the people who had to interpret it, and gave as an analogy Acts of Parliament. He said that if a difference of opinion arose as to the meaning of a particular clause in law, it was the judge who settled the meaning and who interpreted the law and not the people who framed the law. He seemed convinced that Congress would accept any interpretation the High Court gave.

I told him I did not see how we could possibly have a different interpretation put on the meaning of the Cabinet Mission plan to that which the Cabinet Mission themselves had announced on December the 6th after taking legal advice.

I then discussed the joint statement calling for a truce and a denunciation of the use of force to obtain political ends. He said he would gladly sign the statement shown to him or any similar statement if Mr Jinnah and I wished him to do so; though he must point out that the statement, to have any value, should be signed by Mr Kripalani on behalf of the Congress as a whole.

He said he had told Pandit Nehru that if indeed I could get Mr Jinnah to sign and abide by this statement, I should have taken the greatest step politically in the recent history of India, and one which he hoped he had been instrumental in putting into my head. Although I have absolutely no recollection of Mr Gandhi making any such suggestion, I felt it would be politic not to point this out. For although I believed it to have been my own idea I am only too delighted that he should take the credit.

In the meanwhile Lord Ismay came down at my request with the Cabinet Mission plan and the Statement of December the 6th. Mr Gandhi appeared never to have read this statement although he knew of its existence. He thought he was at Noakhali at the time and did not have time to read it. After reading it very carefully he came back to his original point of view that the Cabinet Mission statement should be submitted to the High Court for interpretation, and he felt sure the Congress would abide by their decision.

Lord Ismay pointed out that it was less a matter of finding out what the actual legal interpretation was than of ascertaining what common interpretation would be acceptable both to the Muslim League and Congress; and to this Mr Gandhi unreservedly agreed.

Meanwhile he called upon me to renounce the use of the British Army, and said that he included the British officers of the Indian Army in that term; in other words any of the armed forces under my orders.

I pointed out that except for the Punjab, which is under a Section 93 Government, in all other Provinces it was the local Government that called out the troops, and that if he wanted that practice to stop, why didn't he make a start by talking to the Congress Government in Bihar where he was off to that evening. He said sadly he had already spoken to them, and that if they had had a strong conviction of non-violence they would offer themselves as sacrifices rather than allow these massacres to continue or trying to stop them by the use of troops.

I did not altogether follow his argument here, and may have misquoted him. But since it appeared to be purely academic, and a matter he was going to put before the local Congress Govt in Bihar, I did not pursue it.

He then said that he advised me to go on strengthening the Interim Government, and making them function correctly for the next 14 months; after which he considered I should hand over power to the Interim Government. This staggered Lord Ismay and myself, and we both pointed out that that meant handing over power to one party, namely Congress, to the

grave disadvantage of the other party, the Muslim League, which would not fail to produce strife, possibly leading to civil war.

Mr Gandhi, with a wily smile, pointed out that if Mr Jinnah indeed signed the paper we were sending round to him he could not again use force for political purposes.

I must say I was speechless to find that he proposed, if Mr Jinnah indeed meant to both sign and stick to the statement, to take advantage of this to impose a Congress Government over the Muslims. Here again I find it hard to believe that I correctly understood Mr Gandhi.

Finally, after substituting the word 'communities' instead of 'peoples' and having the declaration of truce retyped, Mr Gandhi appended his signature in all three scripts: English, Urdu and Gujarati; and Lord Ismay took the paper for Sir Eric Mievile to take round to Mr Jinnah.

13. Patel Demands Resignation of League Members

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten, 1 May 1947

SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 146–7.

New Delhi

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

I am enclosing a copy of the report of the speech of the Hon'ble Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar in Abbottabad as reported in the *Dawn* of 28 April 1947.

2. I have had occasions in the past to point out to Lord Wavell some instances in which the League Members of the Interim Government have directly attacked Provincial Governments which were not of their persuasion. Lord Wavell apparently agreed with my view, since he wrote to me in reply that he had spoken to the Finance Member about it.

3. My attitude, which I maintain reflects the correct constitutional view, is contained in my letter to Lord Wavell on the subject, a copy of which I enclose for your ready reference.¹ The repetition of these attacks merely goes to show that my honourable colleagues do not intend to profit by experience. The matter is one which, in my judgment, cannot be ignored, and I would be grateful if you would kindly see that either constitutional propriety is observed by the League Members or, if the League Members are unable to restrain themselves, they follow the only honourable constitutional course of resigning their office from the Interim Government.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

¹ Not enclosed in *SPC*.

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACT FROM *DAWN* DATED 28 APRIL 1947

Addressing a meeting at the Idgah, where the procession had terminated, Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar said: 'The root cause of all the trouble in the Frontier Province is the unnatural Congress Government foisted upon 95 per cent Muslim population. The present Government has become intolerable. This yoke has to be cast away and it must be cast away....

'... If our opponents even now hesitate to concede our just demand we have got to take it whatever the hardships and consequences we may have to bear.'

Chapter 15. Exploring Political Alternatives

1. Pessimism about India's Future

Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and John Matthai, 25 March 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML.

TOP SECRET

Dr Matthai struck me as an absolutely first class man, balanced, reasonable and with a sense of humour. He pointed out the most difficult situation of those who, in the present non-cooperative mood of the Coalition Government, tried to steer an independent and honourable course. These persons, among whose number he counted himself, became more and more disliked by both sides. Dr Matthai said that he had done everything in his power to back up Mr Liaquat Ali in the latter's Budget proposals, and the only result was a bitter attack on him in the Muslim organ *Dawn*. He suggested that all who tried to steer a straight, unbiased course would find themselves becoming increasingly unpopular from both sides.

Dr Matthai confessed that everyone was most pessimistic about the future. But he, like the other political leaders I have met, agreed that the British Government's policy of sending me out with 'carte blanche' was the only possible way of dealing with the situation. He also said that no one in this country had so far got into Jinnah's mind, but thought that I might have a chance of doing so, and breaking down his facade. He agreed that Jinnah had been holding out for a long time on the basis of a negative nuisance value, but he described Jinnah as much more of a realist than he made out.

Matthai gave his opinion that, but for Congress, there was nobody in India, which would not move Heaven and Earth to keep the British.

2. Azad Blames Congress for Rejection of Cabinet Mission Plan

Extract from the Record of Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Maulana Azad, 27 March 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML.

TOP SECRET

Maulana Azad is a charming old gentleman who, though he understands English, spoke through an interpreter. He told me first that if he had not been due at that particular moment to leave the presidency of Congress, that party would have accepted the Cabinet Mission's plan. He said that blame in the first place must be laid on Congress, although it was the Muslim League

which was now intransigent. He considered that there was a good chance that I would succeed in 'deflating' Mr Jinnah; partly by flattering him and partly because he really has nothing to stand on. One of his great objects was to have ministers in the Central Government, and he had no intention of allowing them to leave it....

3. Naga Demand for Self-determination

Letter from the Naga National Council to Lord Simon, London, 27 March 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 61/1947, NAI.

When in January, 1929 Your Lordship at the head of a Statutory Commission on India visited Kohima, situated in the heart of Nagaland, to ascertain the wish of the people in the matter of future governance of their land which was arbitrarily tagged on to India for administrative convenience, we the Nagas made it clear to Your Lordship and Your Lordship's colleagues that we desired to be left alone in the event of the British Government withdrawing from India.

Now that the British Government have set a time for withdrawing from India, we wish to re-assert our right for self-determination.

Enclosed will be found a copy of Memorandum which the Naga National Council has submitted to HMG. Enclosed is also a copy of Communiqué issued by the present Government of Assam.

No argument is needed to show that the Nagas are a separate people, with their own customs, traditions and culture: and to say that the British Government have decided to hand over to Indian hands complete authority of even governing Nagaland, in complete inconsistency with the policy of administration hitherto followed in these hills and in violation of implied but clear pledges in the past years, without even asking the opinion of the Nagas, is not only unjust but immoral.

The demand of the Naga people as will be seen is a very modest one. They have simply asked for a period of ten years during which they should, with the aid of an advanced Nation, be allowed to grow in their own way and find their own feet. The reason for this is obvious. When the Cabinet Mission came to India last year, one in the trio made the notable pronouncement: 'India is politically adult'. This did not mean that Nagaland is politically adult. If, considering India to be politically adult, it is decided to sacrifice the Nagas on the altar of India's Independence, the Nagas who have all these years been loyal to a fault cannot help questioning the right of the British Government in appointing the Indians to be their heirs in succession.

This letter is being sent to acquaint Your Lordship with the submission of the Memorandum on the case of the Naga people to HMG, so that the Memorandum may be given the consideration it deserves.

The interests of the Naga people can only be truly safeguarded by granting them their request as set forth in the Memorandum.

Copy

Kohima, Assam,
Naga Hills, India,
28th March, 1947.

To
Winston Churchill Esquire,
London.

Sir,

Of the Nagas and the land they live in, you may not have heard at all; or may just have heard when the Japanese forces made a daring assault on the Naga Hills in their bid to invade India. But the righteousness of our case entitles us to demand your attention to a letter addressed to Lord Simon, who with the Right Honourable Clement Attlee had the opportunity of seeing with his own eyes our land and our people. The enclosures to that letter are appended as also a copy of Memorandum of the Naga People submitted to the Statutory Commission in 1929.

If proofs were sought of what the Naga People did for the British and the Allied cause when the jewel of British Crown was seriously threatened, we can only refer you to such personages as Lord Wavell and Lord Louis Mountbatten. It is not our intention to boast as to what we did. But when Britain, of her own free choice is letting the jewel go off her Crown, it is pertinent to stress before the man whose name will ever be associated with the Charter proclaiming freedom to all people to choose any form of Government under which they will live, that we did what we did during the war believing a better world of progress and growth, of justice and freedom was in store for us; and that our demand to exercise the right of self-determination in God's good time would not be ignored.

Our country was taken over by the British Government simply to protect their territories in the Plains of India. Nearly seventy years of British administration has taught us the advantage of living at peace with our neighbours. When the British Government make over to Indian hands authority to rule in India, Britain can rest assured that by leaving us in the place we rightly belong to, that is, by acceding to us our persistent demand throughout all these years, the peace of India which Britain is anxious to ensure, will in no way be imperiled from this end.

To Britain, we the Nagas have never said: 'Quit'. But when Time has decreed that Britain should quit, we must say: 'Quit honourably'.

I am
Your obedient servant,
T. Sakhrie
Secretary, Naga National Council

4. 'India's Fateful Hour'

The Tribune, 28 March 1947.

KARACHI, March 27.—In a statement to the Press, Sheikh Abdul Majid, President of the Muslim Jamait says:

'The fateful hour for India has arrived perhaps to be divided, thus converting its several parts into veritable cockpits of dreadful intrigues and rivalries between nations of the world

for economic, commercial, political and strategic considerations, which will be calculated to land India, Asia indeed the whole world into disastrous wars and conflicts. The peace in divided parts may also be disturbed on account of inter-provincial interstate disputes over many matters, not the least important matter of which being the supposed or real oppression of the minorities.

‘If the Major parties, who have developed a peculiar Fascism of their own, fail to agree upon a united scheme, the Viceroy should accept the Muslim Jamait’s scheme of ensuring equal representation to Hindus and Muslims at the union centre. The principle of representation on parity basis for major communities at the united centre enjoys the support of all non-League parties. Major parties are dominated and obsessed by arrogant and aggressive politics of communal provincial majorities, and have prospered at the cost of the minorities. In return the minorities have been mercilessly betrayed politically isolated in some provinces, and actually butchered and subjected to unspeakable inhumanities and atrocities in others. A strong Government alone can protect the minorities and remove communal jealousies and apprehension. Let there be equal representation of Hindus and Muslims subject to joint electorates in the Union Parliament and Executive, reserving 20 per cent representation for non-Hindu and non-Muslim minorities.

‘If the major parties do not accept this proposal let there be a plebiscite of all adults under the supervision of an impartial and neutral authority. The Constitution of free India has to be ratified by the entire population and not only by one party.’

5. British Declaration Indicates No Change of Attitude

Extract from a Report of J.P. Narayan’s Speech at East India Railwaymen’s Annual Conference

National Herald, 28 March 1947.

Though the British know only too well that they cannot stay in India any longer they will certainly take advantage of the differences among the people and will welcome an opportunity to prolong their hold.

If the people do not prepare themselves to snatch power and hold it, a day may come when the declaration of February 20 announcing Britain’s intention to quit would appear to be a fraud.

I disagree with those who think that the British declaration indicates any change of attitude. Self-interest is the life-blood of every colonial Government and they change themselves according to their self-interest. Britain today is helpless and knows well that it is impossible to retain India in the empire. It is the revolutionary urge of the people as shown by the ’42 struggle and which the Congress has nurtured during the last 20 years and the energy unleashed by INA which have forced Britain’s hand. Britain has read the signs of time. That is why the Cabinet Mission was sent here. Britain’s only interest in offering to quit India by June 1948 is to take the maximum benefit from India’s friendship.

The Socialists have always been against a negotiated freedom and their fears are coming true. If the leaders of the country were in jail today instead of being in the Interim Government, the communal frenzy raging at present would never have attained such proportions.

Socialists knew that negotiations would involve waste of energy and time and therefore advocated a struggle. But our leaders had their own fears of struggle and therefore consented to negotiations. The results have given abundant proof of the failure of their policy. If we had

followed the path of struggle we need not have waited for June '48 and would have been free even by June '47. Now we are fighting among ourselves and wasting our energy while Britain is successfully playing its game of giving something by one hand and snatching it away by the other.

The Congress entered the Interim Government to give it the status of a sovereign cabinet but the Viceroy managed to defeat its aim and brought in the Muslim League, without any promise or undertaking, only to strengthen his own hands. The Constituent Assembly, which was to frame the constitution of a free India, was also facing a deadlock. When the Congress protested against the conspiracy and gave an ultimatum, the British Government came out with a dateline for withdrawal from India.

The country's salvation lies in the establishment of a socialist state. It is silly to talk of Pakistan or of Hindu Raj for both would mean suffering for the people. The numerous Hindu and Muslim states bear testimony to the wretched plight of the people in a communal state....

6. 'Jinnah Calls for Truce'

The Tribune, 28 March 1947.

BOMBAY, March 27.—Mr M.A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League to-day called for truce on the basis of Pakistan, the elimination of the British in India and India for Indians.

Mr Jinnah was speaking at a reception given to him by the Memon Chamber of Commerce, Bombay, this evening.

Mr Jinnah added, 'Pakistan will have to be achieved. Pakistan means freedom for all, not for one community. Pakistan means freedom for both Hindus and Muslims. I assure you that I have respect for the great Hindu community and all that it stands for.'

Mr Jinnah continued: 'I am fighting for Pakistan which means I am fighting for the freedom of India. I am fighting for Pakistan because it is the only practical solution for solving the problem and the other ideal of a united India and a rule based on the parliamentary system of government, is a vain dream and an impossibility. India is neither a country nor a nation but is a score of nations.'

Mr Jinnah said:

'Let me tell you who brought this idea into our head. It is the British. What does it matter to Britain if India is divided or not divided? Why should the British bother? Why are they encouraging hopes against hopes? Britain is going. It has to go away. But why should they go about talking of a united India? They know it better than Indians do. Therein lies their (British) salvation. Because as long as it is insisted that India is one they know that there will be nothing but destruction and bloodshed. This has been the idea of Britain and while leaving the country the British are inspiring the armed camp.'

Mr Jinnah further said:

'I appeal to the Mussalmans and Hindus and others to examine the position. Do not be carried away by dreams. Let us be practical; let us agree to divide; we live in Pakistan and you live in Hindustan. We will be neighbours. We want no outsiders.

'We want to live in a friendly way, friends in trade and commerce as two brothers. And that is Pakistan.

'Pakistan is coming nearer and nearer. Therefore, let us now call for a truce and let us agree on Pakistan. It is better to divide and flourish than to be united and be slave and destroy

everything. There is no other alternative. United India will only result in destruction. Why should there be destruction? The answer is very simple. United India can only mean the rule of one nation over another. United India means three votes for Hindus and one vote for Muslims. Therefore, one nation with a brute majority cannot rule and inflict its own ideals on another nation.'

Mr Jinnah characterized as absurd the oft-repeated assertion that the Muslims are a minority. He referred to the percentage of Muslim majority in the Frontier and asked them to consider if such a majority could be called, in any sense, a minority community.

'I ask you, if a union is forced, can it result in anything else but clash? That is why I say that forcing a union of India will not result in anything but a divided India will be able to create stable and secure Governments for both Hindus and Muslims in Hindustan and Pakistan. Pakistan and Hindustan will live in the most friendly way, and will show to the world that India is for Indians and not for any body else.'

Mr Jinnah referred to the exchange of population now being talked of in the country. He mentioned Mahatma Gandhi's reply to questions at Noakhali and Tipperah two weeks ago, 'Answering two questions, Mr Gandhi said that he was agreeable to exchange of population. When I suggested this it was considered a crime and there was a howl.'

Mr Jinnah concluded by exhorting them to remember the seriousness of the situation. He said: 'We are face to face with a serious situation, which requires immediate solution. If we fail, remember that the consequences—I cannot describe it—will be catastrophic.'—API

7. 'Gandhiji's Faith in British Pledge'

Extract from a Report from *The Hindustan Times*, 29 March 1947.

OKRI (Gaya), March 28.—Mahatma Gandhi in his prayer speech here yesterday drew the attention of the people to the first pronouncement made by Lord Louis Mountbatten on his assumption of office that he was sent out to India as the Viceroy to wind up British rule in India and hand over power to the then existing national Government.

Gandhiji said that they must have noticed that the pronouncement was deliberate unconditional and unequivocal. Gandhiji knew that it had become the fashion, though not without cause, to distrust every British declaration at its face value without qualifying it in the light of past experiences. His experience was that it was the declarer who always lost and never the duped if he was honest and brave.

But, Gandhiji added, he very much feared, on account of what had happened in the country that by their folly or, what was worse, their insanity, they might let slip out of their hands their hard-won prize before it was strongly locked in their unbreakable fist. Thus supposed that Noakhali, Bihar and the Punjab had really lost their sanity and the madness swept over the land he had wisdom enough to see that they themselves might tempt the Viceroy to eat his own words uttered on solemn occasions.

Heaven forbid, Gandhiji said that such an occasion should arise. But suppose that did even though his might be the voice in the wilderness he would declare that the Viceroy should firmly and truly carry out his declaration and complete the British withdrawal....



8. Alternative to Cabinet Mission Plan

Extracts from Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the Viceroy's Staff, 31 March 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 200A, NMML.

Uncirculated Record of Discussion No. 2

TOP SECRET

AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE CABINET MISSION'S PLAN

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that it was, and would remain, his primary object to persuade the Indian political leaders fully to accept the Cabinet Mission's plan for the future of India. He was convinced that that plan represented the ideal solution. However, in case of continued non-acceptance of it, other possible plans must be devised. He was at present thinking on the lines of the following alternative:

1. The essence of the plan would be a form of Partition with a central authority for reserved subjects; this to be an experimental arrangement and to come into being in the near future.
2. The three units which would be the result of this Partition would be:
 - (a) Hindustan, to include the predominantly Hindu provinces.
 - (b) Pakistan, to include the predominantly Muslim provinces.
 - (c) The States.
3. Each of these units would be offered a form of Dominion status. In the case of the States, the larger would be offered this status by themselves; the smaller would have to combine into units of suitable size.
4. In view of the grant of Pakistan, and on the same principles which justified that grant, there would be partition of the Punjab and Bengal.
5. The plan would be brought into force in about May 1947, and would run experimentally until June 1948.
6. The Central authority, which might be called 'Central Government' or 'Central Council', would deal only with the reserved subjects of Defence; Foreign Affairs; Communications; Food; and Finance to cover these.
7. The Central Authority, as well as the Hindustan Government, would be situated in Delhi.
8. Each of the reserved subjects would be dealt with by a Council or Board, containing representatives from Hindustan, Pakistan and the States.
9. The Viceroy would continue to have the right of veto on these reserved subjects.
10. About three months before June 1948, a decision would be made as to whether or not the Central authority would remain in being after that date.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that the main advantages of this plan were that it involved the almost complete transfer of power at a much earlier moment than was at present envisaged; that all parties would have something to gain from it; that the help of the British would still be available in the interim period, working solely for the good of India; and that it would mean that India would at least have temporary experience of the benefits of a form of Dominion status. He wished to be assured, before going further, of the practicability of the plan.

SIR CONRAD CORFIELD said that he agreed with the basic idea as far as the States were concerned; it was practicable.

MR ABELL drew attention to the difficulties of setting up any form of Pakistan government in the time allowed. SIR CONRAD CORFIELD agreed with this, making the point that there was no power to which to demit in Pakistan except individual provinces.

SIR ERIC MIEVILLE said that he did not consider that the formula 'Dominion status' was altogether satisfactory. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY agreed with this point of view, and said that some other formula would have to be devised.

LORD ISMAY considered that the main difficulty would be the formation of the Central Authority. MR. ABELL pointed out that it would not be possible to compel the Muslim League to take an interest in the central subjects. He added that the boundary question in the partitioned Provinces would take much time to resolve.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that in his view the most difficult part would be the eventual decision whether or not to keep the Central authority in existence after June 1948. In this connection, he made reference to the reports in Hansard of the speeches in the India debate of Mr Zilliacus and Mr Churchill, both of whom had suggested some sort of organization under U.N.O.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that there were three possible prototypes on which to model the future constitution of India—the United States of America; the Australian Commonwealth, where federal rights had only recently been handed over to the Central Government by the States; and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, where the Ukraine for example had sovereign rights but at the same time was represented at the centre.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY invited the senior members of his staff further to consider the plan outlined above, together with the difficulties therein involved.

9. President of Hindu Mahasabha and Master Tara Singh Represent Hindus

Telegram from V.D. Savarkar to Louis Mountbatten, 2 April 1947

S.S. Savarkar and G.M. Joshi (Eds), *Historic Statements—V.D. Savarkar*, p. 193.

VEER SAVARKAR HAD SENT THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY 'AS GANDHIJI OR CONGRESS ON THEIR OWN CONFESSION DO NOT AND CANNOT REPRESENT HINDU PUBLIC AS SUCH I REQUEST YOUR EXCELLENCY TO INVITE FOR INTERVIEW PRESIDENT HINDU MAHASABHA AND TARASINGHJI BEFORE ANY FUNDAMENTAL CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES AFFECTING HINDUS ARE EFFECTED AS WAS DONE BY LORD LINLITHGOW, SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS, LORD WAVELL, CABINET MISSION ON SUCH OCCASIONS IN THE PAST'



10. Questions Posed to Jinnah on Pakistan

Extracts from minutes of Viceroy's Seventh Staff Meeting, 3 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 200A, NMML.

...Item 11

LIST OF 'AWKWARD QUESTIONS'

SIR ERIC MIEVILLE handed to His Excellency a list of 'A few questions that the Viceroy might consider putting to Mr Jinnah regarding Pakistan.'

Addendum

A FEW QUESTIONS THAT THE VICEROY MIGHT CONSIDER PUTTING TO MR. JINNAH REGARDING PAKISTAN

Geographical. If it is decided to hand over responsibilities to entirely separate Governments for Hindustan and Pakistan, what case could be made out which would justify HMG in handing over to Pakistan the areas contiguous to Hindustan in which there is a non-Muslim Majority? These areas amount to thirteen districts in the Punjab and eight districts—including Calcutta—in Bengal. (Lists attached.)

Is not the claim for the whole of the Punjab and Bengal simply a claim to non-Muslim territory? The Congress have said that they are ready to concede the Muslim majority districts. On what principle do you base your demand for the addition of Sikh and Hindu territory?

If the whole of the Punjab were included in Pakistan, do you think you can

- (a) cope with the Sikhs;
- (b) impose your will on the rest of the non-Muslim population;
- (c) maintain the necessary good relations with Hindustan in spite of the hostility that your actions would arouse?

The same argument applies *vis-à-vis* the non-Muslim areas in Bengal.

You have frequently said that Muslim feeling is now so strong that a United India is impossible. On the assumption that the Punjab and Bengal are to be divided and that HMG will not be a party to giving the League more than the Muslim majority districts, how would you set about the Partition? Would you suggest a Boundary Commission or a decision by HMG? It must be remembered that time is short.

Defence. Could you propose

- (a) to maintain a separate Army and Air Force;
- (b) to build munition factories and other industries necessary to support such forces; and
- (c) to be strong enough to face Russia and Hindustan at one and the same time?

Where are the resources in finance, minerals and expert manpower to justify such a course? Surely you can only survive in a defensive Alliance with Hindustan—for example, a common Defence Council.

Finance. Would not the financial position in Pakistan be such that it would be difficult to maintain its social services and impossible to make adequate provision for defence? It will be necessary for Pakistan to pay a proportionate share of the existing Government of India's liabilities including, in particular, defence, National Debt and pension charges of an All-India

Character—What authority would be entrusted with the working out of the division of these liabilities and how would Pakistan be able to meet their obligations?

Would Pakistan feel obliged to set up their own Central Bank and their own Currency? If so, would not this create serious difficulties for them? Would Pakistan have its own Customs Barriers and create a Customs Service of its own?

List of districts

<i>Punjab</i>	<i>Bengal</i>
Hissar	Burdwan
Rohtak	Birbhum
Gurgaon	Bankura
Karnal	Midnapore
Ambala	Howrah
Simla	24-Parganas
Kangra	Jalpaiguri
Hoshiarpur	Darjeeling
Jullundur	
Ludhiana	
Ferozepore	
Amritsar	
Gurdaspur	

11. Muslim State Preferable to Working with Congress

Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Liaquat Ali Khan, 3 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML.

The meeting lasted from 11.10 a.m. to 12.15 p.m.

I took him to task for allowing Members of the Interim Government to take an active part in the Committee of Action of the League, as reported in Dawn. He explained that most of the Members of the Interim Government belonged either to the Congress Committee or the Muslim League Working Committee. I accepted this but complained that the League Ministers were actively associated with the Committee of Action, to which he replied that they had been members of the Committee of Action before joining the Interim Government.

I told him that in their own interests they should either resign or refrain from taking an active part in the Committee of Action, and that I should probably take a convenient opportunity of expressing this view to Mr Jinnah. I ended with the very strong advice to him not to embarrass the position of the League in the Government by allowing these activities to continue.

We discussed the setting up of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. He gave me his very strong reasons against this at some length, and I have asked him to let me have these reasons in writing together with his proposal as to how the political difficulty can be overcome.

I asked him whether, in the event of my obtaining complete Congress adherence to the letter and spirit of the Cabinet Mission's statement of the 16th May, he felt there was any chance that Mr Jinnah would then come back to his original agreement. He replied that the communal strife had become so bitter that he felt there was now no chance.

I then asked him what, if he were in my place, his solution would be for the transfer of power.

He smiled engagingly and said 'Since my dealings with the Congress Members of the Interim Government, I have come to realize that they are utterly impossible people to work with, since there is no spirit of compromise or fair play in them, and the majority are thinking only of ways and means by which they can do down the Muslim League and improve their own position'. He continued: 'I consider the position now so intolerable that if Your Excellency was only prepared to let the Muslim League have the Sind Desert, I would still prefer to accept that and have a separate Muslim State in those conditions than to continue in bondage to the Congress with apparently more generous concession.'

Finally, he gave me a brief report of progress in his Department, and asked me to include in the Defence Committee, when, it was set up, the Member for Communications, Mr Nishtar, so as to ensure that there would be at least two Muslim League Members on the Committee.

12. Any Idea of Division Unacceptable

Letter from Chowdhry Kishenlal Lamror, General Secretary, All India Jat Mahasabha, Ajmer, to J.B. Kripalani, 4 April 1947
AICC Papers, File No. CL-3 (Part I)/1946-7, NMML.

Sir,

Herewith I am forwarding a copy of the resolution passed by the All India Jat Mahasabha in its Annual General Session held at Bharatpur on the 15th and 16th March 1947 under the presidentship of the Hon'ble Sardar Baldeo Singh, Defence Minister, I.G. of India for your kind perusal.

Yours sincerely,

Enclosure

Copy of the resolution Nos. 4, 6

Copy of the resolution No. 4

'This session of the All India Jat Mahasabha reiterates its old demand that the Province of Delhi be extended by attaching to it the Ambala, Jullundhur and the Lahore Divisions of the Punjab and the Meerut, Agra and the Ruhelkhand Divisions of the UP and Ajmer-Merwara and the province thus formed should be raised to the status of a Governor's Province.

The Mahasabha is in full agreement with the decision arrived at in this connection by the Working Committee of the Indian Congress and resolves that immediate steps should be taken for the fulfillment of the above aims.

Copy of the resolution No. 6

'This session of the All India Jat Mahasabha has its firm faith in indivisibility of India and in view of its status and importance would never tolerate any idea of its division.



13. 'Sardar Patel's Rejoinder to Jinnah—Truce Possible by Giving Up Use of Sword'

Extracts from a Report from *Bombay Chronicle*, 4 April 1947

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Home Member of the Interim Government and Member of the Congress Working Committee, today replied to the speech made by Mr M.A. Jinnah last week at Bombay calling for a 'truce' on the basis of Pakistan.

Sardar Patel who was addressing a large gathering of the citizens of Ahmedabad this evening, organized by the City Congress Committee, characterized the theory of Pakistan as 'a huge joke' and 'a child's play.' Pakistan, he said, could be attained only on the basis of justice and not by force of arms or the sword.

In a 60-minute speech, Sardar Patel surveyed political situation in the country and the important role which India could play in world affairs, if she could settle down to govern herself in an orderly manner befitting a free country.

Sardar Patel said: 'The goal of the Congress is very near. The "Quit India" resolution passed by the Congress in August 1942 is about to be fulfilled by the latest declaration of the British Government to quit India by June 1948.'...

The Muslim League, Sardar Patel said, was trying to capture power in the Punjab and the Frontier and to invade Assam and to establish Pakistan. But it was not an easy thing.

Referring to the offer to truce made by Mr M.A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League, in Bombay recently, Sardar Patel asked how there could be truce on the basis of Pakistan or Akhand Hindustan. Truce in the real sense meant giving up arms and the use of the sword.

'Pakistan can be established only on the basis of justice. There are impartial agencies or tribunals who can decide the question.

The Congress is ready to sign the truce if the question of Pakistan is referred to an impartial tribunal. That implied that there should be no killing. Political problems are not solved by fight or resort to arms.'

'The Congress has made its decision', declared Sardar Patel, 'when it invited the representatives of the League to meet Congress representatives and come to an understanding. Congress will not submit to any injustice. Truce has no meaning if the Congress is called upon to submit to any dictation by the League.'...

14. 'A Surgical Operation' of India Is the Only Solution

Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and M.A. Jinnah, 5-6 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML.

When Mr Jinnah first arrived on Saturday 5th April, he was in a most frigid, haughty and disdainful frame of mind. A number of photographs was taken of him standing between myself and Her Excellency. He was recorded in the newspapers as describing himself on this occasion as 'a thorn between two roses'. (Later I challenged him on this, and told him I thought he had said 'A rose between two thorns'. He said 'Yes, but in my mind I was expecting Her Excellency to be between you and me'.)

After having acted for some time in a gracious tea-party hostess manner, he eventually said that he had come to tell me exactly what he was prepared to accept. I said that I did not

want to hear that at this stage—the object of this first interview was that we should make each other's acquaintance. For half an hour more he made monosyllabic replies to my attempts at conversation—but one and a half hours after the interview started he was joking, and by the end of our talk last night (6th April, when he came to dinner and stayed until half an hour past midnight) the ice was really broken.

Our talks covered all subjects. I made it clear to him that I had not yet made up my mind what solution to recommend to His Majesty's Government, and that at the present I was utterly impartial. But I explained that it was my policy to make a decision as soon as possible after seeing all concerned. He agreed not to force the pace, assenting that, whereas the whole of India was awaiting a quick decision, that decision must be the right one. I added that the problem, as I saw it at the moment, was not so much what to do, but how to do it in the time.

Mr Jinnah claimed that there was only one solution—a 'surgical operation' on India, otherwise India would perish altogether. I replied by reiterating that I had not yet made up my mind, and pointed out that an 'anaesthetic' must precede any 'surgical operation'....

He also spoke of the emotionalism of the Congress leaders, pointing out that they had every reason for this when it was a question of getting rid of the British, but this reason no longer held good.

He accused Congress leaders of constantly shifting their front. They were determined, he said, to inherit to the full all the powers now exercised by the British in India. They would stoop to anything to gain this object—even to acceptance of Dominion status—rather than that any part of India should be handed over to the Muslims.

At the end of our interview, after he had told me a succession of long stories about how appallingly the Muslims had been treated, I informed him that what fascinated me was the way that all the Indian leaders spoke with such conviction.

He said that in his view the members of the Cabinet Mission had been imbued with the wrong attitude—they had come out pleading for agreement instead of laying down a solution. I pointed out to him that I was in a very favorable position compared with the Cabinet Mission and others who had been sent out to find a solution to India's future, as I did not have to obtain prior acceptance from the Indian parties to the course I intended to recommend to His Majesty's Government. I said that I would of course not recommend any solution which was patently unacceptable. He seemed pleased with these remarks.

15. Congress May Agree to Partition if It Precludes Civil War

Extracts from an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Rajendra Prasad, 10 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML.

TOP SECRET

The meeting lasted from 12 noon to 12.45 p.m.

Dr Rajendra Prasad gave me a brief account of his visit to the projected Kosi Dam area, and he spoke enthusiastically of the scheme.

I asked him what he would do if he were in my place about the transfer of power. He said he found it impossible to divest himself momentarily from his association with being a Hindu and a member of Congress, and asked me what my ideas were.

I said that I still had a completely open mind, but that it had become clear to me that Mr Jinnah was thinking only along the line of partition.

Dr Rajendra Prasad enlarged on the disastrous consequences of the break-up of Indian unity; and I expressed agreement with his sentiments and his reasoning. I then asked him whether he considered that those reasons were strong enough to override the objection that there would almost certainly be a civil war if I were to enforce it against the wishes of the Muslim League.

He agreed that the position now reached made civil war very likely if I were to try and enforce a decision against the wishes of any large section of the people.

I then asked him if he thought that Congress would accept voluntarily a decision which virtually abandoned the idea of Indian unity if that were the only way that I could transfer power without a risk of civil war. He said that if that were the position, he was inclined to agree that it might be accepted; since he did not see how I had any alternative but to transfer power in any manner which would not involve civil war.

We both eventually agreed that if it were possible to introduce a time element into the stages by which partition was implemented, that this would give some prospect of reason prevailing over communal emotional sentiments.

I asked him about the food situation in India, and he replied that although stocks were far shorter than he would like to see them, and although there were the added difficulties that wheat eaters had to be given rice and rice eaters had to be given wheat, according to locality, time of year and stocks available, he nevertheless did not fear any famine, and thought that we should get through the next year—short but not disastrously short of food.

16. Socialists for Unity of Country and Provinces

Extracts from a Press Interview by Jayaprakash Narayan, 10 April 1947

Bimal Prasad (Ed.), *Jayaprakash Narayan: Selected Works*, Vol. IV, pp. 131–2.

....So far as the question of the partition of Bengal and the Punjab is concerned, the Socialist Party wants no division either of the country or of any province, except where the people concerned want it on a linguistic and cultural basis and without affecting the integrity of the country. The Socialist Party believes in a united India and united Bengal and united Punjab. But this is a matter that does not rest with our wanting or not wanting certain things. Events may take a course contrary to our desires and we may not have the strength to check it. In other words, if the forces of reason, patriotism and socialism combined cannot prevent the division of the country, it becomes axiomatic that the division must be made on the basis of self-determination, territories choosing their centre of loyalty by their free will. In such an eventuality the partition of Bengal and Punjab becomes inevitable. I, therefore, believe that it is the duty of nationalists, including socialists, to make it clear to those who are bent upon dividing the country that they can not do so without dividing the Punjab and Bengal.



17. Mountbatten and Jinnah Debate Viability of Pakistan

Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and M.A. Jinnah, 10 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML.

Mr Jinnah came at 4 o'clock, but I arranged to leave the field clear for Lord Ismay to talk to him until 4.45 and go through the points he had written down after his last meeting. From 4.45 to 6.30 I was present at the discussions.

Mr Jinnah could not possibly have been more clear that he would have nothing to do with the Cabinet Mission plan; and so we went ahead and followed up his desire for partition logically. He said that what he wanted was a surgical operation cutting off the 5 Provinces in the 'B' and 'C' areas, and turning them over to Pakistan, leaving the other six Provinces to Hindustan. He stressed that time did not permit any negotiations or details, and urged that I should give an over-all decision as soon as possible and allow the details to be worked out subsequently.

Lord Ismay and I were at pains to point out to him that unless we could get some indication of what mechanics were required to implement any decision, it would be impossible for us to consider such a decision.

I then explained to Mr Jinnah that although I still retained a fully open mind, the only way in which I could follow his advice was to pursue it to its logical conclusion. I said to him as regards the question of a united India: 'You claim the right of a large minority people to partition on a big scale. If I grant you this how can I refuse Congress, who will press for exactly the same right for the large Hindu minorities in the Punjab and Bengal to be partitioned.'

We argued these points back and forth, Mr Jinnah's main point being that I must make his Pakistan 'viable'. He quoted the partition of Poland as not having been made on the basis of counting heads or taking into account the will of the people.

I told him I was not prepared to proceed on this basis, and that I must follow a course that would be generally acceptable, so as it was mechanically possible in present conditions to ascertain the will of the people. For this purpose I had in mind an immediate announcement that I would demit power to Provinces in June 1948, and that Provinces would have the right forthwith to decide whether they wished to join any other group of Provinces or remain entirely autonomous. I presumed in fact that Sind, half of Punjab and probably the NWFP would form one Group, part of Bengal another Group, which together would form Pakistan. The remaining Provinces I assumed would wish to join Hindustan.

I pointed out that Pakistan and Hindustan would then have to set up their constitution-making machinery and that the Indian States would have the opportunity of joining up with one or other of these two Constituent Assemblies, or of making separate negotiations, though how this should be done would require working out.

Mr Jinnah became more and more distressed and displeased at the turn the conversation was taking, claiming that Congress were deliberately drawing a red herring across my path, and threatening that in that case he would demand the partition of the Province of Assam. I replied that certainly I would grant him the same rights of course as Congress, and if he wished to put the Muslim majority areas of Assam in with Bengal he must let me have his proposals.

I continued to stress that this scheme was very tentative: until I could see what mechanics were involved I could neither tell whether the scheme was in fact practical or how long it would take to implement it.

Since he denied that the scheme I had just outlined was in any way what he wanted, he said he could not possibly contribute anything useful to working out the mechanics. Lord Ismay accepted that he should work out the mechanics, which would be submitted to Mr Jinnah for his views.

I pointed out that if it became evident in the course of investigation that the scheme could not be implemented in full by June 1948, then we would endeavour to work out a proposal by which the Indians could continue negotiations on a programme of implementation after our departure.

We next discussed the procedure to be adopted in following through whatever proposal I finally decided to make to HMG. Mr Jinnah urged me not to write any letters on the subject, that it would be a good thing to put the proposals to the Prime Minister before the proposed decision formally to the leaders.

Mr Jinnah said he had wanted to call his Working Committee but had now decided not to do so for the present.

He asked to be allowed to see what the Congress proposals were for carving up the Punjab and Bengal, so that he could submit counter proposals.

I decided that I would ask Pandit Nehru to come and see me and ask him for the proposed boundaries for the partition of the Punjab and Bengal, and to discuss with him the solution on which I had been working with Mr Jinnah.

I also said that I would suggest to Pandit Nehru that the Constituent Assembly should not meet on the 28th April, but should have its meeting postponed until after the decision had been announced.

Lord Ismay submitted the draft he had prepared for the joint call by the leaders of both parties for a truce to provocative action and violence. Mr Jinnah took it away with him to consider the wording carefully, it being arranged that Sir Eric Mievill should see him about getting the final wording agreed by him before it was submitted to Pandit Nehru.

Finally, I should like to record that in the course of this conversation I took the opportunity of Mr Jinnah's bitter complaints about my ruining his Pakistan by cutting out half of the Punjab and Bengal including Calcutta and by making it economically very difficult if not impossible to function, to try and bring him back to the Cabinet Mission plan. I told him that I entirely agreed with him that the moth-eaten Pakistan which was all I could possibly offer him was almost unworkable, and I strongly expressed my inability to see why he was not prepared to accept the Cabinet Mission plan, which gave him the whole of the Punjab, the whole of Bengal including Calcutta and the whole of Sind, with complete autonomy, and in fact accorded to him a really worthwhile and workable Pakistan.

I pointed out that so far as I could see the only difference between the scheme I was prepared to give him and that which he could get under the Cabinet Mission plan was that under the Cabinet Mission plan he was obliged to accept a small weak Centre at Delhi controlling Defence, Communications, and External Affairs. I pointed out that these three might really be lumped together under the heading of General Defence, and that I did not see how under the new scheme he could possibly avoid joining some organization at the Centre to take care of General Defence. In fact I prophesied that he would find that he had thrown away the substance for the shadow, and that he was going to get an almost unworkable truncated Pakistan which would still be obliged to share a common organization at the Centre to arrange over-all defence. Whereas if only he would come back to the Cabinet Mission plan, he could have the whole of

the Pakistan he wanted, without really having any tighter organization over him at the Centre than he would sooner or later be bound to accept under the truncated scheme; added to which, I pointed out, he was ruining the position of India as a great Power, and forever pulling her down to something below a second class Power.

18. Mountbatten Realizes United India Impractical

Minutes of the Viceroy's Thirteenth Staff Meeting, 11 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 200B, NMML.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that it had always been and would remain his main desire to hand over power to an unified India with a strong centre. The next best to this would be to hand over to an unified India with a weak centre—such as was envisaged in the Cabinet Mission plan. He had now had six meetings with Mr Jinnah. The one the previous day had lasted for three hours. He had brought all possible arguments to bear on Mr Jinnah but it seemed that appeals to his reason did not prevail. He had pointed out to Mr Jinnah the enormous advantages of retaining an unified India—as one, India could be immensely powerful and in the front rank of world powers. He had asked Mr Jinnah why he could possibly wish to throw away such advantages. Mr Jinnah had not been able in his presence to adduce one single feasible argument in favour of Pakistan. In fact he had offered no counter arguments. He gave the impression that he was not listening. He was impossible to argue with. They had covered the whole ground time and again on every conceivable basis with no progress whatever. He had assured Mr Jinnah that he regarded himself as more or less the first head of the Indian state and that it was his sole intention to do whatever was best in the interests of the Indian people. Mr Jinnah was a psychopathic case. He was, whatever was said, intent on his Pakistan—which could surely only result in doing the Muslims irreparable damage. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that it was, however, quite clear to him that, if any effort was made to try and impose the Cabinet Mission plan, the Muslim League would resort to arms. He added that until he had met Mr Jinnah he had not thought it possible that a man with such a complete lack of sense of responsibility could hold the power which he did.

LORD ISMAY said that he believed that the dominating feature in Mr Jinnah's mental structure was his loathing and contempt of the Hindus. He apparently thought that all Hindus were sub-human creatures with whom it was impossible for the Muslims to live. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY pointed out that, in any case, the Muslims and Hindus would have to live together. He had told Mr Jinnah that he believed that Congress were so keen on keeping an unified India that he might be capable of persuading them to pay the price of giving over the whole of Bengal, the Punjab, Assam, and the North West Frontier Province on the condition that a weak centre should be retained. He had also told Mr Jinnah that he believed that it would be possible so to work out the Constitution of the Centre that neither party could move the Armed Forces without the consent of the other, but again Mr Jinnah had not listened.

LORD ISMAY said that he had got the impression that, for the last half hour of the previous day's meeting with Mr Jinnah, there had been some change of atmosphere. Mr Jinnah had made some effort to be helpful. He had said that, whatever the Viceroy decided, whether he agreed with it or not, he would never doubt His Excellency's sincerity or good faith. He had also proffered helpful advice on two or three points.

HIS EXCELLENCY said that there had come a moment in his interview with Mr Jinnah two days previously when the latter, with a smile on his face, had hesitantly mentioned that, although he did not suggest that it might affect the decision, the first act of the Pakistan Government would probably be to apply for admission to the British Commonwealth on Dominion status. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he had informed Mr Jinnah that his instructions were to do nothing which would in any way help towards the splitting-up of India. It was the desire of His Majesty's Government, he had said, that there should be a strong unified India free to choose herself whether she wished to remain in the British Commonwealth or not. He had explained that he could not possibly be a party to any suggestion that Pakistan should enter the Commonwealth, nor could he give any indication of what His Majesty's Government's attitude might be. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he believed that this had been a very rude shock to Mr Jinnah, who had apparently thought that His Majesty's Government would jump at his suggestion.

SIR ERIC MIEVILLE said that he did not believe that Pakistan was an economic possibility. MR ABELL said that the political objections to Pakistan were in his opinion much greater. Economically it could be made to work, weak though it would be. A paper on the economic viability of Pakistan had been sent in by Mr Zinkin and Commander Nicholls was at the moment preparing a criticism of this paper.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that in his opinion the time factor was of over-riding importance. Mr Jinnah had no idea of the broad outline of the mechanics and time-table of establishing Pakistan. Everyone must bear in mind that the sheer logic of events and mechanical difficulties were likely to wield the greatest influence.

LORD ISMAY said that it was fast becoming apparent that it would be impossible to hand over complete power to the Provinces by June 1948. They would not be ready to receive it. Some sort of a central organization would have to remain for a few years. There always remained the possibility that Mr Jinnah might be invited to be Prime Minister of the Central Government. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that, from what he had seen of Mr Jinnah, he doubted that if he was brought into the Government any measure would thereafter be passed on its merits. LORD ISMAY pointed out that there was always a tendency for responsibility to improve people in such cases out of all recognition. MR ABELL said that he did not think that Mr Jinnah would accept an invitation to join the Central Government. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he believed that he might do so on the grounds that it was the best way of getting his own policy through, but he would probably ask for a portfolio. MR ABELL considered that there might be great difficulty in persuading Congress to grant the Muslim League another seat.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he was seeing Pandit Nehru that afternoon and he intended to take him fully into his confidence, which he had not yet done. He had not yet in fact asked the Congress leaders, with the exception of Mr Gandhi, for their proposals.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY emphasized that he still retained a completely open mind. He wanted, however, Lord Ismay to start to work out the details of the plan at present primarily under consideration. When and if the time came for this plan to be announced, he wanted a most careful preamble to be written making it clear that his view had all along been completely impartial; that it was only when it became apparent that the retention of any form of an united India would start civil war that he had regretfully been obliged to give up this ideal; and that

he had therefore chosen a means which gave the choice of their future, as well as the somewhat primitive democratic machinery could allow, to the Indian people themselves.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY finally emphasized that the chosen plan would of course be put up for approval to HMG before Indian party leaders were informed of the decision. He visualized that a simultaneous announcement might be made in Parliament by the Prime Minister and by himself over the wireless in India. He decided that he would make this announcement only in English and not also in Urdu.

19. Patel on Prospects of Unity and Partition

Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Vallabhbhai Patel, 12 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 192, NMML.

The interview lasted from 3 to 4.15 p.m. I first of all gave Patel an account of my negotiations with Mr Jinnah, and an explanation of why I have never consulted him, or any member of Congress, before as to the solution that they suggested should be followed for the transfer of power. I pointed out that this had meant that I could truthfully tell Mr Jinnah of my own views for the best future of India without having got my ideas from any member of Congress. I told him that my own views were that the very best for the future of India would be a firm Union with a strong Central Government, and that I would like to see the present Interim Government operating by itself, with the possible addition of Mr Jinnah with an important portfolio and to transfer power to that Central Government when I leave in June 1948.

I told him that my next best solution was the Cabinet Mission plan, and that the one solution that I did not wish to be forced into was Pakistan, but that if it were Pakistan it would have to be a truncated Pakistan.

I then asked Sardar Patel if he felt that Congress could be made to accept the Cabinet Mission plan without any reservations. He asked me if I meant by that that they should accept HMG's statement of the 6th or 7th December. I pointed out that what I meant was that if Mr Jinnah could be made to accept the Cabinet Mission plan, then that Congress and he should accept the same interpretation, or at least agree upon an interpretation to be accepted. Sardar Patel informed me that it was he who finally got Congress to agree to accept the Cabinet Mission plan at the last moment, and that he remained the strongest protagonist in the Congress Party of the Cabinet Mission plan. (In passing it may be of interest to record that Lord Wavell informed me on the 22nd March that it was Sir Stafford Cripps who went to Sardar Patel and persuaded him that Congress' best interests lay in accepting the Cabinet Mission plan, since otherwise it left the field clear to the Muslim League. He implied that the motive was to obtain an apparent success for the Cabinet Mission and conceal for as long as possible their failure.)

Sardar Patel told me that the mistake that all the British had permanently made with Mr Jinnah was always to give way to him, as a means of saving his face. He said that Mr Jinnah would only accept the Cabinet Mission plan when the force of circumstances gave him no alternative. He told me that as soon as I announced the partition of Bengal, the Muslim of Bengal would secede from the League in order to preserve the entity of Bengal. He thought that this might possibly follow in the Punjab, and it would not be unlikely that there would be a revolt of the League against Mr Jinnah if he had nothing better than the Sind, and possibly half of the Punjab to offer them for Pakistan, if Congress still retained their hold on the N.W.F.P.

Thus he thought that there was a real chance that either Mr Jinnah would be forced to come to my terms, or be overthrown by the League. In either case Sardar Patel promised me his support in getting Congress to support the Cabinet Mission plan at such a moment. He promised to send me information as to the exact present position of Congress with regard to the acceptance of the Cabinet Mission plan.

He complained very bitterly at the decision he had only recently learnt that HMG would not turn over the Secretary of State's services until June 1948. He asked me how I imagined it was going to be possible for the Interim Government to govern, if they had no control over their services, and how he could get rid of disloyal members who are harming the Central Government.

I told him that if he reported to me any cases of disloyalty, and supported it by good evidence, I would take any necessary steps myself.

I pointed out to him that since it was now highly doubtful that there would be a unified India, and since, in fact, Pakistan was looming up before us, I did not see to whom the Secretary of State's services could be turned over, since it was not even clear who would be in Pakistan and who would be in Hindustan.

Finally he made a long dispassionate and reasoned indictment against Lord Wavell in his system of government. He said that until the formation of the Interim Government, Lord Wavell had governed with a strong Centre, and had kept law and order in the Provinces. Since the formation of the Interim Government Lord Wavell had allowed such power to go to the Provinces that they could defy the Central Government, and by the introduction of the Muslim League members, against the advice of Congress, had so weakened the Centre that India was rapidly disintegrating into a lawless state.

He called upon me to strengthen and support the Central Government to keep unruly Provinces in order and show that I meant to maintain proper law and order, and stop further bloodshed.

I replied that my first preoccupation must be to find, as soon as possible, the correct solution and announce it, which I felt would do more than anything else to remove the causes of the strife. In the meanwhile I intended to put out a truce, to be signed by Mr Gandhi and Mr Jinnah.

20. Two Plans for Transfer of Power

Minutes of the Viceroy's Fourteenth Staff Meeting, 12 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 200B, NMML.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that of the many possible plans which were still under consideration, the two receiving most thought at the moment were:

- (a) Plan 'Union', which was the Cabinet Mission's plan possibly modified in some respects; and
- (b) Plan 'Balkan', which contemplated leaving to each Province the choice of its own future and would almost certainly result in a form of truncated Pakistan and the eventual abolition of a Centre, although it would be necessary to retain a Centre for some time after June, 1948, at least to deal with Defence until the Armed Forces were divided.

Plan 'Union'

MR ABELL said that Mr Jinnah had always proclaimed that he would accept the Cabinet Mission plan if Congress did so unreservedly. He gave his opinion that there was now no chance of Congress doing this. LORD ISMAY said that he did not believe that it was impossible that Congress would do so, though it would indeed mean a complete change of heart.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he believed that there was a chance that, if the alternatives were clearly stated to them, the Congress leaders would take the step forward required to denote unequivocal acceptance. He had got the impression that the Congress leaders desired a united India above all and might well, if they were told the alternative, decide to accept plan 'Union' so as to achieve this end. The next step must clearly be to try and obtain Congress's agreement.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said he had learnt the previous day that Mr Gandhi's plan, which involved offering the premiership of the Interim Government and the selection of a new Cabinet to Mr Jinnah, had been turned down by the Congress leaders. He was going to see Mr Gandhi that morning and would try and work round to the possibility of getting his influence to bear on the unreserved acceptance by Congress of the Cabinet Mission's plan. Not until after that acceptance would it be possible to approach Mr Jinnah again.

MR SCOTT suggested that the Viceroy might then appeal to a representative Muslim body before accepting Mr Jinnah's opinion as final. There were three such bodies in existence—the All-India Muslim League Council, the All-India Muslim League Committee and the Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly who had been elected although they had never taken their seats.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that this was indeed a suggestion worthy of consideration, although he would obviously not be able to address the chosen body in person. Perhaps a member of his staff might read an address from him, or such an address might be recorded. It would be valueless to leave it to Mr Jinnah to put his (His Excellency's) point of view forward. MR SCOTT emphasized that, if this appeal to a Muslim body was made, the maximum publicity for it would be necessary, the issue must be put before the whole world. In a private meeting, not open to the glare of world publicity, Mr Jinnah would, without doubt, have his own way.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that a possible alternative would be to call a Press Conference and, through that, tell the world in concise and irrevocable language exactly what the situation was. He pointed out that he had got the Prime Minister's permission to convene a Press Conference whenever he thought it necessary. MR SCOTT pointed out that the Muslim League's main fear was what was going to happen to them after June, 1948. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that this was confirmed by points raised in an interview which he had had the previous day with Mr Liaquat Ali Khan. The latter had suggested that after June, 1948, an impartial British head of the State should remain. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that such a person would be in a most difficult position as impartial decisions were always apt to annoy both sides. LORD ISMAY and SIR ERIC MIEVILLE agreed that such a person would be in an impossible position, having responsibility with no authority.

Plan 'Balkan'

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that, if plan 'Balkan' was eventually chosen, he intended, when the announcement of the decision was made, to broadcast a preamble showing how negotiations had progressed since his arrival. He would make clear that he had tried throughout to look at

the whole problem objectively. He would say that he had always believed that an united India was the ideal answer, preferably with a Central Government similar to that at present in power, and with safeguards for the minorities. He would point out that he had devoted a long time to trying to obtain acceptance of a plan for an united India but that in the end he had found that it would be impossible to impose such a plan without a recrudescence of bloodshed, leading perhaps to civil war. He had therefore decided that the only answer was to leave the decision in the hands of the people themselves and to give the Provinces freedom to decide on their own future with the option of joining one or more groups.

SIR ERIC MIEVILLE asked how the Provinces would make their decisions.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY pointed out that in most cases there was no doubt of what each Province desired. In the North-West Frontier, however, it would probably be necessary to have an election; and in the Punjab and Bengal partition might have to come. He went on to say that he would, in this preamble, make clear the choices which had been put before Mr Jinnah—acceptance of plan ‘Union’ with a small centre and what would, in fact, be an untruncated Pakistan; or a truncated Pakistan with some central organization to begin with at any rate, as the Army was certainly going to remain united until June, 1948. The preamble would have to contain a review of the sincere attempts on the part of the British to find a peaceful solution. It would require most careful presentation.

MR ABELL said that during his conversation with Rao Bahadur Menon the previous day, the latter had at first insisted on the desirability for granting Dominion status to India immediately if Plan ‘Balkan’ was brought into operation. He had pointed out the disadvantages of this and had given his opinion that the Governor-General must keep the power in his own hands until June, 1948. Rao Bahadur Menon had eventually withdrawn from this position.

Finally, LORD ISMAY threw out the suggestion that the possibility of making use of the United Nations Organization should not be ruled out.

21. Azad’s Solution for Congress–League Compromise

Letter from Abul Kalam Azad to Louis Mountbatten, 14 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 15, NMML.

New Delhi.

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

There is one point I forgot to discuss with Your Excellency when I met you last Saturday.

You will remember I pressed that the League should accept the Cabinet Mission plan and the interpretation of December 6th. The Congress has accepted both. If, however, the League should argue that the Congress acceptance of the interpretation of 6th December does not meet the League’s objections, I would suggest the following way out. Let both the Congress and the League agree that they will accept your reading of the 6th of December interpretation, not in your capacity as the Viceroy but in your personal capacity. I hope you will put this to Mr Jinnah when you meet him again, and if he is prepared to accept this solution, I am confident that I can persuade the Congress to do the same.

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

22. Mountbatten Comments on the Political Situation

Extracts from Viceroy's Personal Report No. 3, 17 April 1947
TOP, Vol. X, pp. 296–303.

....23. Having had nearly three weeks of incessant talks with all the leaders, I think I ought to let you know the lines on which my mind is working.

24. In the first place, I am convinced that we have got to make up our minds one way or the other in the very near future if we are to avert civil war and the risk of a complete breakdown of the administration. On this there is complete unanimity of opinion, both European and Indian, in this country. The Governors have not a shadow of doubt about it. My first conclusion, therefore, is that our decision must be announced before the end of May at latest.

25. Secondly, I have very slender hopes of getting acceptance of the Cabinet Mission plan, and I am very much afraid that partition may prove to be the only possible alternative.

26. Thirdly, I feel strongly that the scheme of partition should be such as will not debar the two sides from getting together, even before we transfer power, if saner counsels prevail when the bewildering complications of partition are more clearly realized.

27. I will not send you even a first draft of the plan at this stage, as it is all so tentative, but I have discussed it with the Governors and hope to let you have a further report next week. The chances are that I will send Ismay home with the draft announcement towards the end of this month to discuss it with you, and try to reach the earliest possible agreement on the precise terms.

28. Once this is done, I plan to try to get Jinnah, Nehru, Patel, Liaquat, Baldev Singh and possibly Bhopal and Patiala, to come and stay with me in Simla. The date at which I am aiming is the 15th May. Alternatively I might aim at a rather bigger 'round table conference'. I will then make one final determined effort to secure some compromise on the basis of the Cabinet Mission plan. If I fail, I shall have to fire my last shot in the shape of our announcement of partition. I shall ask both Nehru and Jinnah to have their working committees in Simla, so that they may refer to them before pronouncing a definite view.

29. I ought to add that whatever the decision may be, I feel that the Central Government should be as strong as possible until we hand over. In this connection I am thinking of trying to get Jinnah to join the Cabinet. One of the difficulties would be the question of an appropriate and acceptable portfolio. I doubt whether Congress would surrender either External Affairs or Home Affairs, and I doubt whether Jinnah would look at anything else. Perhaps he might be Leader of the House? The talks in Simla would then be in the nature of a discussion of a Cabinet Committee, which would, I think, be all to the good. ...

36. We have had two garden parties and have about three luncheon parties of 30, and larger dinners each week, at which I have made it a rule that not less than 50 per cent of those present must be Indians. There has been the greatest spate of Indian names in the Visitors' Book ever known at Viceroy's House, and the atmosphere appears to be remarkably friendly. I now have three full time Indian ADCs, a sailor, soldier and airman from the major communities. Unfortunately I feel I must record that my young daughter sitting with two English ladies to whom she had not been introduced heard one say to the other 'It makes me absolutely sick to see this house full of dirty Indians'. I recounted this story to the Governors, and have invited their co-operation in sending home anybody who expresses sentiments of this type.



23. Congress President Prefers Pakistan to Forced Unity

Extracts from Record of Interview between Louis Mountbatten and J.B. Kripalani,
17 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 192, NMML.

TOP SECRET

....I next asked him whether he had made up his mind as to what advice he would like to give me for the transfer of power. He replied 'The point has now been reached at which the Congress must reluctantly accept the fact that the Muslim League will never voluntarily come into a Union of India. Rather than have a battle we shall let them have their Pakistan, provided you will allow the Punjab and Bengal to be partitioned in a fair manner'.

I asked him whether Congress unequivocally accepted the Cabinet Mission plan, as clarified by the statement of December the 6th. His reply was 'HMG themselves admit that we have accepted it'. I invited him to write me a letter setting forth the details of the acceptance. He said it was all quite clear in the various resolutions, but that if I wished it he would look them up. I told him that when I have the final meeting with the leaders, which I hoped would be in a month's time, I should undoubtedly ask the question straight-out whether they accepted the Cabinet Mission plan, and that it would be to the advantage of Congress to be able to say 'Yes', even if it were only for the sake of history.

We then discussed what could be done to maintain law and order. He said 'The only thing we ask of the British is to maintain law and order and be fair and impartial during their last 14 months out here.' I assured him that this was our policy; and he replied 'There are many officers of all seniorities who have been out here too long to be able to change their outlook. I do not believe they can be impartial; they are so strongly imbued with anti-Congress ideas or pro-Muslim ideas. On the Frontier, even Indian members of the ICS have been affected; the whole of the Frontier administration is now anti-Congress; that's what makes the situation there so difficult.'

He told me that he had been brought up under British rule, and although he did not like the rule he had to admire the complete efficiency with which the British could keep law and order if they wanted to. I replied that conditions had changed: Governors were the constitutional Heads of Provinces and had to do what their Governments told them to do. He said that to this day the prestige of a British Governor stood so high that he was convinced that any man worth his salt could make his Government keep law and order. I quoted the case of Bihar, and told him of the difficulties Sir Hugh Dow was experiencing. He said I do not wish to speak against any man by name. I invited him to say what he thought, and he very reluctantly said 'Sir Hugh Dow is one of the most notorious anti-Congress men in India. No wonder his Government cannot co-operate with him.'...



24. Distribution of Hindu and Muslim Populations in Punjab and Bengal
Letter from Rajendra Prasad to Louis Mountbatten, 18 April 1947
Valmiki Chaudhary (Ed.), *Dr Rajendra Prasad: Select Documents and Correspondence*,
Vol. VII, pp. 35–6.

1 Queen Victoria Road
New Delhi

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

I understand from Acharya Kripalani that you wanted to have information regarding the districts of Bengal and the Punjab which would fall in the Muslim and non-Muslim zones in case divisions of those Provinces are made. I have dealt with the question at length in my book *India Divided* but I may refer to the two maps at the end of the book which show in different shades the districts with Muslim and non-Muslim majorities and Indian States in blank. The figures are given in tabular form for the Punjab at pp. 239–46 and for Bengal at pp. 247–8. It will be noticed that in Bengal there are two districts on the border line—Dinajpur with a Muslim majority of 50.20 per cent, and Khulna with a Hindu majority of 50.31 per cent, and similarly in the Punjab there is the district of Gurdaspur with a nominal majority of Musalmans of 50.14 per cent.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad.

25. India's Stand on Entry to Commonwealth

Extract from the Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and V.K. Krishna Menon, 22 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 192, NMML.

Top Secret

I had a long and friendly talk with Mr Menon over a cup of tea. We properly let down our hair together and discussed every aspect of the plan now being worked on, and in particular of its relation to the world situation. I found that he had very shrewd views on the future trend of governments in the UK and America, and on world-wide politics.

He expressed his fear to me of American absorption from every point of view. He thought that Mr Grady had been shooting off his mouth in a manner which revealed only too well and clearly what the Americans' object in India was: they wished to capture all the markets, to step in and take the place of the British, and finally he did not exclude the possibility that their aim might even be to get bases in India for ultimate use against Russia.

I discussed with him the announcement in the Press that if Pakistan were formed it would undoubtedly wish to remain within the British Commonwealth. I told him that I had made clear to those Muslim Leaders who had spoken to me about it that I had no authority whatever to deal with the question of Pakistan remaining within the British Empire, and that in fact I should probably advise against it, since we could not wish to back one side of India against another if it came to civil war. The only way of avoiding the risk of this would, of course, be not to concede the Pakistan demand to remain within the Empire. But I pointed out that if the demand went over our heads to the peoples of the British Commonwealth, the demand might

be too strong to be resisted, and that in fact he must now reckon with the extreme likelihood of Pakistan being a British dominion.

If that happened they would of course have a complete call on British officers, and all the Services, who wished to remain in India, since they could so remain whilst retaining the King's Commission. Not only would they be able to get the same equipment as Hindustan, but could do a great deal better, since they could obviously get secret equipment not available to anybody not within the Commonwealth, and they could go to our schools and make use of our experimental establishments, and keep up-to-date. In fact, backed by British and American arms and technique, Pakistan would in no while have armed forces immensely superior to those of Hindustan, and in spite of the obvious disadvantages from which they would at first suffer, there was no reason why they should not be able to rise above these with British and American help; and I presumed that places like Karachi would become big naval and air bases within the British Commonwealth.

I asked him how he would like to see that happen; and he absolutely shuddered, and said 'How can we prevent it?' I said 'By the simple expedient of being in the Commonwealth yourselves; then there can be no question of Pakistan getting ahead of you, nor could there be any question of the unilateral use of bases without full consultation.'

He said 'I see that, but how in the world can it be achieved?' (He pointed out that they had pretty well burnt their boats by the statements about leaving the Empire and that it would be extremely difficult for him to get it over, even with Nehru, who would be the only person who would immediately understand it, and even more difficult with Patel; and that even if the three of them got together, he did not see how they could get it across to Congress or to peoples of Hindustan).

I pointed out that this was entirely a matter for themselves to decide. But I suggested to him a solution along the lines he himself had raised last time, namely Dominion Status before June 1948, so as to avoid the necessity of having to make any declaration when he left, and thus leave India within the Commonwealth. My proposal was that if we could possibly get the scheme working in time, Pakistan and Hindustan should be declared independent dominions, with a Central Defence Council, a single army (pending partition) and with myself at head of the Central Defence Council and as Governor-General of both dominions on a constitutional basis. I pointed out that the British Army would come directly under my command, and that would be my personal contribution to the Defence Council. I suggested that in order not to imperil the sovereignty of dominion status, each dominion could voluntarily accord me the right of a casting vote as Chairman of the Defence Council.

He seemed rather smitten with this idea, but said immediately, that it would be far better to declare India a single dominion which would consist of two parts—Pakistan and Hindustan, since he still harped on the fact that to give each side dominion status was advertising the complete separation of Pakistan.

I urged him to open his eyes and see things clearly. If Pakistan were given independent status, then they were cutting themselves adrift from the British Commonwealth.

He said that the furthest he thought it would be possible to go would be to call themselves an Independent Nation in relation with the British Commonwealth.

I reminded him that the crux of the matter was that they should not sever their connection with the Crown, since on this depended the ability of British Officers holding the King's Commission to serve in India. Once more I said to him 'You cannot have your cake and eat it; make up your mind which you want to do.'

Finally he told me that Pandit Nehru was over-working to the point of a breakdown; that he had relays of shorthand typists in and out all during the day and night. Not only was he dealing with the big problems, but he was always going down and attending to every little item; personally attending small meetings, and even trying to interfere in street scenes. He asked me if I could not take him away for two or three days on a holiday; and said laughingly 'to avoid both of you breaking down from over work'. I said 'Where shall I take him, Simla?' He said 'No, that is too official; you would neither of you stop working'. I said 'Where else?' He said 'Why not try Kashmir'? ...

But he still wished me to take Nehru away for two or three days, anywhere restful, so that we could get to know each other—'For', he said, 'between you, you can solve all the problem of India'.

He told me that Nehru was becoming unpopular with the Hindus through his international and unbiased outlook.

I told him I was expecting to see the President of the Hindu Mahasabha soon; and he then urged me, in that case, to see the Secretary of the Shia Conference, Mr Ali Zaheer, who had been in the first Interim Government and had made way when Mr Liaquat Ali Khan joined. He said he was at Lucknow, but would come up if sent for. He claimed that the Shias were a fairly numerous section of the Muslim community, all of whom were opposed to the Muslim League.

26. Fatima Jinnah Argues Case for Pakistan

Record of an Interview between Edwina Mountbatten and Fatima Jinnah, 24 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 84A, NMML.

Miss Jinnah spent an hour and a quarter with me yesterday afternoon, and, as previously, was most friendly to me, personally.

It was difficult, however, to stop her from talking politics almost continuously, although I tried to steer the conversation quite often onto other subjects.

Nevertheless, she somehow always managed to return to political topics and made violent attacks on Congress and the Hindu community as a whole. She seemed almost fanatical at times in her attitude.

I was interested to note in our conversation that she made frequent references to the fact that 'the Muslims would fight for separation and their rights if these were not agreed to', whilst the next moment she would stress the way her brother was supporting in every way the Non-violence Declaration, and at the same time made continuous references to the fact that Pandit Nehru and others in Congress were doing just the opposite.

Like Mr Jinnah, she has, of course a persecution mania, and is obviously convinced that the Hindu intends to subjugate and dominate the Muslim completely.

She gave me a number of concrete examples of persecution and discrimination by the Hindus, and asserted that the police and Government officials, even here in Delhi, were also discriminating in favour of the Hindu. As an example she stated that Muslims in the Delhi area were searched much more drastically than anyone else to see if they were carrying fire-arms or other unauthorized objects, and said that she had had complaints on this score that very day, (the other side of the picture, is of course, given equally forcibly by Congress Members, and

by Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, a paper on which is attached regarding the North West Frontier Province).

When I tried to be sympathetic regarding the Muslim demand for Pakistan, but at the same time asked for information as to how Pakistan in its original form or in a modified one would really work, Miss Jinnah refused to give any definite answer, saying all the time that the problems involved would be quite easy once Muslim demands had been agreed to.

As far as Bengal and the Punjab were concerned she admitted that the non-Muslim communities might not wish to remain permanently within Pakistan, but that they would, of course, be allowed to make their own choice. This, on the other hand, she stated, would have to be made possible for the Muslim minority in the Hindu areas.

27. Patel Demands Immediate Transfer of Full Authority

Extract from the Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Vallabhbhai Patel, 24 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 192, NMML.

....I invited him to come at 3 o'clock on Friday for discussions with the senior members of my Staff about the plan for the transfer of power, and he accepted gladly.

Finally he said 'Since you have come out here things have got much worse. There is a civil war on and you are doing nothing to stop it. You won't govern yourself and you won't let the Central Government govern. You cannot escape responsibility for this bloodshed'. Asked to elucidate a little more, he explained that he was not trying to link my arrival with the bloodshed since the bloodshed had been occasioned by HMG's statement of the 20th February, and the desire of the Muslim League to seize power wherever they could, hoping that I would transfer power to them.

He concluded by saying: 'If you will not act yourself, then turn over full authority to the Central Government and let us stop the Muslim League war in the Punjab and N-W Frontier; let us stop the Muslim League being mobilized in Bengal to attack Assam; let us govern.'

28. Transfer of Power on Dominion Status Basis

Minutes by H.L. Ismay to Louis Mountbatten, 25-8 April 1947
TOP, Vol. X, pp. 437-40.

H.E.

In accordance with your instructions, I send you herewith a note on what we generally refer to as the 'V.P. Menon Plan'.

2. As you will see, it is a long-term plan, which cannot be put into effect until both Hindustan and Pakistan have the necessary machinery to operate it. This is not likely to be until the end of this year, even if everything goes swimmingly.

3. We think it important that, when the time comes, the suggestion for a plan of this kind or anything like it should come from the Indian leaders themselves and should not appear to originate with us.

ISMAY
25th April, 1947

CVS

I should like the plan (amended as desired) to be typed out as an Appendix to the papers you are taking home, so that the Cabinet may be aware of its existence.

Re your para 3—I take it VP can get Congress to put this request forward when the time comes—but if they don't we can still pin it to their existing request for interim dominion status.

M of B
28/4

Appendix

Note by Mr V.P. Menon

TOP SECRET

Undated

**Transfer of power as an interim arrangement
on the basis of a Dominion Constitution**

The alternatives before us are (a) a United India on the basis of the Cabinet Delegation's plan and, if that is not possible, (b) a Divided India. In deciding on this main issue, the question of Dominion Status is not relevant. But in the moves that we may be making the objective of Dominion Status has to be kept in mind as an interim arrangement.

There is now complete frustration in the political field. In the fast moving political scene in India a quick decision is essential. Lawlessness is on the increase. Conflict between capital and labour is constant. Economic instability will add to our political troubles very soon. With the best will in the world British authority in India cannot tackle any of these problems seriously since it is avowedly in the process of liquidation. If then we stick on to the last date and to the last hour, we shall probably find the country in a turmoil, and a measure of responsibility for this state of affairs will be attributed to HMG.

The question then is, can a positive contribution be made now?

If HE's efforts succeed in bringing the parties together on the Cabinet Mission plan, there is every advantage in transferring power as early as practicable to an Executive responsible to the Constituent Assembly in which once the League comes in the Princes also will participate. This is the ideal solution.

If we fail on the Cabinet Delegation's plan, the alternative is the division of India. The only reason for us to continue the existing set-up till June 1948 is to see that the arrangements that are necessary to give effect to the partition are implemented. With the best will in the world, we can only set up machinery and cannot, in view of the time factor, be responsible for the ultimate outcome. Is it not then better tactics to confront the parties *as constituted authorities* with the problem from the beginning?

For the transitional period Congress has accepted Dominion Status, and if we accept that proposition immediately, there is a good chance that the interim arrangement may cover a fairly long period during which the question of Independence *versus* Dominion Status may not come directly in issue so far, at any rate, as the Congress is concerned. On the other hand, if we defer parting with power to the last minute, we may not have any alternative except to hand over on the basis of complete independence.

If the partition issue is settled, it would be difficult for us to resist the Congress claim for freedom to administer their own territories in the manner they like unhampered by an uneasy coalition, and the Muslim League then cannot argue that the whole thing should be deferred till their Pakistan is actually on its feet.

There is the question of the position of the States too. The States get back their freedom when we part with power in British India. There are many matters of common concern which it will be difficult for the existing set-up to settle either on a temporary or a permanent basis. Here again, once a free India (or Indias) knows where it stands, it is up to it to negotiate either a stand-still agreement or a long-term plan.

HMG have already declared that they would like to part with power in an orderly and peaceful manner. If this is to be accomplished, the starting point should be the existing Constitution. On any other basis there will be very great administrative dislocation. There are a considerable number of provisions in the Govt of India Act and the Orders in Council under it which will have to be kept in being either temporarily or permanently. On the other hand, if power is transferred on the basis of Independence in June 1948, India may have to draft an interim Constitution in addition to a permanent one.

Our starting point for the transfer of power should therefore be the existing Govt of India Act. It has to be duplicated if there are to be two Indias.

The plan would roughly be on the following lines. If HE fails to bring the parties together on the Cabinet Delegation's plan, HMG would then give an award for the partition of India. Some of the partitioned areas (that is, non-Muslim areas) will probably decide to come into the existing Constituent Assembly. NWFP may not do so. Other partitioned areas will probably have a Constituent Assembly of their own. Each of the Constituent Assemblies will be asked to elect an Executive Council, to which HMG would transfer authority in their respective areas as an interim arrangement till they draft their own Constitutions.

The Act has to be duplicated for these areas with suitable amendments withdrawing the control of the Secretary of State and the special powers of the Governors and the Governor-General. The existing Indian Legislature will be abolished and its place will be taken by the two Constituent Assemblies.

The Governor-General will be common for both Hindustan and Pakistan and will be appointed by His Majesty. The Governors of Provinces will be appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of his appropriate Executive Council.

The question then arises what is to happen in regard to matters of common concern, for example, Defence, External Affairs and Communications. For this purpose a Joint Council should be constituted with equal number of representatives selected by both the Hindustan and the Pakistan Executive Councils. This Council would be presided over by the Governor-General and will decide the joint policy on these subjects which will be implemented by the respective Governments. The Commander-in-Chief and other Heads of Services may be called in for advice as occasion arises.

It will be open to the two Governments to appoint Committees to consider the question of common arrangements as regards other joint services in the same way as we shall have to make arrangements with the Indian States. Pending the conclusion of such agreements, the best course would be for the existing services to function in responsibility to the separate Executives in respect of the different areas in which they operate. This arrangement could be superseded by negotiated agreements as they are ready or separate authorities could take over complete control in the two States as soon as they are equipped and ready to do so.

The psychological effect of power having been transferred earlier than 1948 will be an invaluable factor in the long-term view of Indo-British relationship. If there is to be a division of India, it will take not less than 4 or 5 years for both parts of the country to frame their Constitutions, hold elections and come to arrangements about the common matters. Once complete transfer of power is made as an interim measure on Dominion Status basis, the urgency of producing a Constitution immediately will lose its force and the parties will be given time to think things over with leisure and sobriety and proceed meanwhile with the urgent problems of administration and development. Further, the joint arrangement on the Defence side and the part that the Governor-General plays in that sphere will go very far in cementing the good relationship between Great Britain and India. One may also hope that if the two Governments sit together and start drafting agreements they may find that these agreements are required in respect of so many matters that they may ultimately come right round to the view that an impassable barrier cannot be created between the two Indias and that after all a unified Constitution is better for all concerned. Finally it may happen that having realized the importance and usefulness of the presence of a Governor-General appointed by His Majesty, both the parts of India may see the benefit of retaining that link with Great Britain.

29. Liaquat Ali Khan on the Future Political Scenario

Letter from Eric Mievile to Louis Mountbatten, 29 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 84A, NMML.

Your Excellency,

I dined with Liaquat Ali Khan last night, and after dinner we had about twenty minutes talk. He started on the usual communal lines, saying that whereas the Muslims were being accused of violent methods, people had short memories and had apparently forgotten the iniquities of the Hindus in Bihar. He went on to talk of the proposed plan and said that he was in no way worried about Bengal as he was convinced in his own mind that the province would never divide. He thought that it would remain a separate state, joining neither Hindustan nor Pakistan.

He then went on to the Punjab and said that he could not understand the attitude of the Sikhs to whom the Muslims had offered far better terms than the Hindus. He added that the trouble with the Sikhs was that they were very stupid people and lacked a leader. They talked about Sikhistan, but as a matter of fact there was not a single district in which the Sikhs were in the majority. He had pointed this out to them and told them that it was all a question of counting heads and on that basis the Sikhs had no case. He was not unhopeful of persuading them to join the Muslims, in which case he could see no reason for the division of the Punjab.

He then went on to talk about the North-West Block and said that British help would be needed by the Muslims, particularly to develop their industries. They had been used to dealing with the British who were satisfied with their 5 per cent, whereas if they went to the Marwari Baniyas, who were the only alternative, barring the Americans, they would want at least 10 per cent on their money and would strangle development, being closely allied to the Hindus.

He finally referred to Dominion status and hoped that we would not drive the Muslims out of the Empire.

E.M.



30. 'Partition Plan for India Admitted: Provinces to Be Split'

Daily Worker, 29 April 1947.

From A.S.R. CHARI, *Daily Worker* Special Correspondent

BOMBAY, Monday.—The first open admission of the move to partition India based on Viscount Mountbatten's talks with top Congress and Moslem League leaders was made today.

Speaking at the Third Session of the Constituent Assembly in New Delhi, Dr Rajendra Prasad, the President, declared that they must be prepared not only for the division of India, but also for the division of some provinces.

Present were representatives of some one-third of the Indian Princes who have decided to participate in the Assembly. The Moslem League kept its boycott going.

Political circles in New Delhi say that Lord Mountbatten's interim arrangement for transferring power will be to introduce dualism at the centre in the Punjab and in the NW Frontier Province.

The Times of India, following its traditional Anglo-Indian, pro-Imperialist policy, declares that Indian distrust has made division necessary in order to avoid 'a further grim harvest of communal slaughter.'

It ignores the obvious fact that the very threat of partition has unleashed a new crop of fratricidal savagery.

GOING AHEAD

The Constitution Assembly is expected to reassemble again in June or July.

If, as seems certain, Britain decides on partition the Assembly will go ahead without the limitations of the State Paper of May 16, 1946, and advise strong union for Hindu majority and non-Moslem areas of British India, and for such of the States as will have joined the Constituent Assembly.

Thus Congress hopes to face June, 1948, with a fully worked out Constitution for the major part of India.

31. 'The Partition Racket'

Editorial from *Dawn*, 30 April 1947.

If one were to go by what appears in the Hindu Press it would indeed seem as if the demand for the partition of the Punjab and Bengal had not only received the universal support of the people residing in the areas in question but that these two provinces had already been as good as partitioned. Such is the power of propaganda. The progress of this spurious agitation provides an interesting study of Congress technique, and of course the Congress can now be taken as a generic term which embraces the Hindu Mahasabha, the RSS and every other Caste Hindu body whatever the label under which it plies its communal trade. We do not pretend to know what view Lord Mountbatten takes of the extent of support which this partition stunt has been able to secure but to those who have lived with Indian political problems for any reasonable length of time this cannot but appear to be a *mala fide* communal racket.

The 'partitionists' claim that their demand for the division of the Punjab and Bengal has the same basis of justification as the Muslim demand for a division of India. This is *prima facie* absurd and untenable. If one examines the two demands from the positive aspect it will appear

as plain as a pikestaff that there is a radical difference between the underlying principles. The Muslims want Pakistan on the ground that as a separate nation they are entitled to a separate homeland. The Hindus of certain Western districts of Bengal and the Hindus and Sikhs of certain Eastern districts of the Punjab cannot claim the partition of these provinces on the same principles, because their Hindustan, the homeland of the Hindu nation, is already there. If the Hindus of Western Bengal claim a separate homeland on the provincial basis the Muslims in Bihar, UP and other Hindu majority provinces can do the same. Viewed negatively, the difference between the two demands becomes even more apparent. If Pakistan or a separate national homeland is denied to the Muslims, then the Muslim nation will not be left with a single inch of territory in the whole of this sub-continent which they can call their own. But if the Hindus and Sikhs of Western Bengal and Eastern Punjab are denied the partition of these two provinces, the effect on the Hindu nation will not be the same. The Hindus will still have a national home far larger and far stronger than the national home of the Muslims. Those, therefore, who say that the partition of Bengal and the Punjab should follow as a matter of 'ruthless logic' from the Muslim demand for the partition of India are being victims of confused thinking. What they consider good logic is in fact an obvious fallacy.

The second argument of the partitionists that if Muslims of India as a whole are unwilling to accept the rule of the Hindu majority, the Hindus and Sikhs of Bengal and the Punjab are similarly entitled to say that they will not accept the rule of the Muslim majority, is equally untenable. It is quite obvious that even when a Muslim sovereign State of Pakistan is established many millions of Muslims will continue to live in Hindustan, similarly millions of Hindus will continue to live in Pakistan. Even if the two provinces of Bengal and the Punjab are partitioned this problem will not be solved and well over 20,000,000 Hindus will still be left in what is being described as 'truncated Pakistan'.

These broad aspects of the respective demands of Muslims and Hindus should convince all right-thinking persons that the two do not stand on the same footing, nor have they the same justification. The first is genuine, the second is *mala fide*, and the one does not logically follow from the other. These facts are likely to be overlooked unless an unbiased mind is brought to the study of the problem. It is, however, idle to expect spiteful and clamorous propagandists to recognize the validity of facts, because their one chance of success lies in suppressing the truth and keeping issues confused. Nevertheless, when they talk of 'logic' they will do well to remember that if logic is to be carried to such lengths then the carving knife cannot stop after having sliced up Bengal and the Punjab. Of necessity, it will have to do some carving in UP, Bihar and Madras as well; and ruthless logic must award to the Musalmans a big slice of the city of Delhi, not merely on grounds of population but also of history.

32. Jinnah's 'About-turn'

Letter from E. Stanley Jones to Rajendra Prasad, 1 May 1947
R.P. Papers, File No. 6-I/45-6-7, NAI.

Dear Dr Prasad:

I wrote to you on April 26th regarding a conversation with Mr Jinnah. The substance of the conversation was this: Mr Jinnah said, 'Your suggestion is absurdly simple, but if the Congress would say that it would concede Pakistan, then I am prepared to say I will enter a union with the rest of India.'

'And mean it?' I asked.

'Yes, and mean it,' he replied.

I am compelled to report the sequel.

When one of the Congress leaders raised the question of what Mr Jinnah meant by 'union', I wrote to Mr Jinnah on April 27th as follows:

'In continuation of our conversation I write for clarification regarding one point.

'When you said that "If the Congress would say that it would concede Pakistan, I would say that in that case, it is my intention to enter a union with the rest of India," I take it that you meant federal union. Is that correct?'

This reply was received today: 'Regret it was your own suggestion, thoroughly impracticable and contradictory.'

From this complete repudiation of what he said to me, you will have to draw conclusions. I have drawn mine.

Very respectfully yours,
E. Stanley Jones

33. Congress Position on Proposal for Transfer of Power

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten, 1 May 1947

AICC Papers, File No. G-4/1947, NMML.

Secret

17 York Road
New Delhi.

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

The Congress Working Committee met this afternoon and had the benefit of Gandhiji's presence and advice. I thought it desirable to acquaint the Committee with the major developments that had taken place since their last meeting and, in particular, with the steps that you propose to take in the near future. Five of the members of the Committee are members of the Interim Government.

2. Neither I nor my colleagues of the Interim Government, who were present at our meeting, know the full extent of the proposals that Lord Ismay is taking with him to London. But you have been good enough to keep me informed of the broad outlines of these proposals and I placed these before the Committee. I felt that it was important that they should know them and should express their opinion confidentially in regard to them at this stage in order to avoid any misunderstanding at a later stage. I am writing this letter at the instance of the Committee to convey their reactions to recent developments and the new proposals, in so far as we know them.

3. It has been our Committee's earnest desire that India should achieve her freedom peacefully and in an orderly manner. Our whole policy, even in regard to conflict, has been peaceful. We had accepted the Cabinet Mission's Scheme last year, even though we did not approve of it wholly, in the hope that it might lead to such peaceful and cooperative transfer of power to Indian hands. Subsequently we accepted in its entirety the British Government's interpretation of this Scheme, which they issued on December 6th, 1946, although this was contrary to our own interpretation. In the same hope of achieving results peacefully, we

welcomed HMG's announcement of February 20, 1947. We have tried to adhere faithfully to the Cabinet's Missions Scheme in our work in the Constituent Assembly and otherwise.

4. We have, however, been faced with a major difficulty. The policy of the Muslim League, started in August last, has deliberately encouraged violence and disorder and has resulted in murder, arson and loot in many parts of India. This has affected the functioning of both the Central Government and several provincial governments. It has indeed been the dominant feature of Indian politics during the past eight months.

5. In view of the fact that we had made it clear at the outset that there should be no compulsion in making or enforcing a constitution for India on any unwilling parts, the necessity for this policy was not obvious, unless it was meant to terrorize and compel others against their will. The announcement of February 20, 1947, led to an intensification of this Muslim League policy and what used to be riots developed into organized large-scale violent attempts to overpower provincial governments. In spite of the most horrible consequences of this policy, it was not stopped or even suspended.

6. Our invitation to the Muslim League to send their representatives to meet ours was not responded to. We reiterated that we were against any compulsion over any part of India, and even indicated our acceptance of the principle of partition of India in order to avoid conflict.

7. We had hoped that the joint appeal for peace and the declaration that violence must on no account be used for political objectives would lead to the withdrawal of the Muslim League's 'direct action' movement and the cessation of organized violence. This did not happen, and indeed there are indications that there will be an intensification of this policy.

8. Every proposal and every change must be viewed in this context. If policy is to be influenced by the kind of brutal and terroristic methods that have prevailed thus far, then the inevitable result will be civil war on an extensive scale. The continuous appeasement of those who employ such methods and a submission to these tactics is the surest way to encourage them and to produce other dangerous reactions. We can on no account be parties to such a policy.

9. We feel that we must lay stress on this as it is the dominating feature of the situation and other matters are secondary. Unless this is appreciated there can be no common approach to our problems.

10. This applies in particular today to the situation in the Frontier Provinces. We wish to make it clear that we cannot agree to a surrender to this violence of the Muslim League which has resulted in horrible tragedy [*sic*] and which is still continuing and finding encouragement. We have not seen any condemnation of the events in the Frontier from any Muslim League leader.

11. Any proposal to put an end to a duly constituted provincial government having a large majority at its command, and to hold elections as a result of terrorism must be considered a surrender and must be resisted.

12. In regard to the proposals which, I presume, Lord Ismay is carrying with him to London, our Committee are prepared to accept the principle of partition based on self-determination as applied to definitely ascertained areas. This involves the partition of Bengal and Punjab. As you know, we are passionately attached to the idea of a United India, but we have accepted the partition of India in order to avoid conflict and compulsion. In order to give effect to this partition every effort should be made to meet the wishes and the interests of the people affected by it.

13. Even before and apart from such partition, recent events have made an administrative division of both Bengal and Punjab an obvious and urgent necessity.

14. In regard to Baluchistan, it would be improper for a few Sardars of the Shahi Jirga or some nominated members of the Quetta municipality to decide the future of the province. An attempt should be made to consult the people of the province. There is still plenty of time to devise some method for this purpose.

15. I have not entered in this letter into any detailed consideration of all your proposals as we have not got them before us in their final form.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru.

34. 'Partition of Punjab and Bengal—A Sinister Move'

Dawn, 1 May 1947.

DENOUNCING the demand for a partition of the Punjab and Bengal as 'a sinister move actuated by spite and bitterness' Mr M.A. Jinnah, President of the Muslim League, in a statement in New Delhi on Wednesday night said: 'I do hope that neither the Viceroy nor His Majesty's Government will fall into this trap and commit a grave error.' Mr Jinnah reiterated his demand for the creation of a Muslim National State consisting of six provinces. 'The transfer of power to the Pakistan and Hindustan Governments', Mr Jinnah said 'must mean a division of the defence forces. This is a clear cut road and the only practical solution of India's constitutional problem.'

Mr Jinnah also envisages that an exchange of population will have to take place and 'the Constituent Assemblies of Pakistan and Hindustan can take up the matter and subsequently the respective Governments in Pakistan and Hindustan can effectively carry out the exchange of population wherever it may be necessary and feasible.'

The following is the text of Mr Jinnah's statement:

'I find from the Press reports that the Congress has now started by emphasizing that in the event of Pakistan and Hindustan being established, the Punjab will be partitioned and the Hindu Mahasabha has started a vigorous propaganda that Bengal should be partitioned.'

PRINCIPLE OF PARTITION

'I should like to point out that there is a great deal of confusion created on purpose. The question of the division of India, as proposed by the Muslim League is based on the fundamental fact that there are two nations—Hindus and Muslims and the underlying principle is that we want a National Home and a National State in our homelands which are predominantly Muslim and comprise the 6 units of the Punjab, N.-W.F.P., Sind, Baluchistan, Bengal and Assam. This will give the Hindus their national home and national state of Hindustan which means three-fourth of British India.'

'Now the question of partitioning Bengal and the Punjab is raised not with a *bona fide* object but as a sinister move actuated by spite and bitterness as they feel that India is going to be divided, firstly, to create more difficulties in the way of the British Government and the Viceroy and secondly to unnerve the Muslim by opening and repeatedly emphasizing that the Muslims will get a truncated or mutilated, moth-eaten Pakistan.

'This clamour is not based on any sound principle except that the Hindu minorities in the Punjab and Bengal wish to cut up these provinces and cut up their own people into two in these provinces.

HINDU HOMELANDS

‘The Hindu have their homelands. As I said, consisting of six vast provinces. Merely because a portion of the minorities in the Pakistan provinces have taken up this attitude, the British Government should not countenance it because the result of that will be, logically, that all other provinces will have to be cut up in a similar way, which will be dangerous, as to embark on this line will lead to the breaking up of the various provinces and create a far more dangerous situation in the future than at present.

‘If such a process were to be adopted, it would strike at the root of the administrative, economic and political life of the provinces which have for nearly a century developed and built up on that basis and have grown and are functioning under the present Constitution as autonomous provinces.’

BEWARE OF THE TRAP

‘It is a mistake to compare the basic principle of the demand of Pakistan and the demand of cutting up the provinces throughout India into fragmentation. I do hope that neither the Viceroy nor His Majesty’s Government will fall into this trap and commit a grave error.

‘It is obvious that if the Hindu minorities in Pakistan wish to emigrate and go to their homelands of Hindustan they will be at liberty to do so and vice versa those Muslims who wish to emigrate from Hindustan can do so and go to Pakistan; and sooner or later exchange of population will have to take place and the Constituent Assemblies of Pakistan and Hindustan can take up the matter, and subsequently the respective Governments in Pakistan and Hindustan can effectively carry out the exchange of population wherever it may be necessary and feasible.

‘The Congress propaganda is intended to disrupt and put obstacles and obstructions and difficulties in the way of an amicable solution. It is quite obvious that they have put up the Hindu Mahasabha in Bengal and the Sikhs in the Punjab, and the Congress Press is inciting the Sikhs and misleading them. The Sikhs do not stand to gain by the partition of the Punjab but they will be split into two halves. More than half of their population will have to remain in Pakistan even if a partition of the Punjab takes place according to their conception, whereas in Pakistan, as proposed by the Muslim League they will play, as one solid minority, a very big part. We have always been very willing to meet them in every reasonable way.

‘Besides, the White Paper of February 20 lays down that power will be transferred to authority or authorities which will be made in a manner that will be smooth and create the least amount of difficulties and trouble.’

CLEAR-CUT ROAD

‘If power is to be transferred to various Governments it can only be done successfully to the Pakistan Group and the Hindustan Group which will establish stable, secure Governments and will be able to run these Governments peacefully and successfully.

‘The transfer of power to Pakistan and Hindustan Governments must mean a division of the defences as a ‘sine qua non’ of such a transfer and the defence forces should be completely divided—and in my opinion can be divided before June 1948—and the States of Pakistan and Hindustan should be made absolutely free, independent and sovereign. This is a clear-cut road and the only practical solution of India’s constitutional problem.’—API



35. India's Relationship with the British Commonwealth

Letter from Archibald Nye to Louis Mountbatten, 2 May 1947

IOR, R/3/1/152, Acc. No. 3467, NAI.

MADRAS GOVERNOR'S CAMP

Guindy

My dear Dickie,

In the published statements of the British Government we have said that India is at liberty to choose whether she will remain within the British Commonwealth or out of it, but the Prime Minister has usually added that he hopes she will decide to stay in. I notice that Mr Alexander has made a few speeches recently much on the same lines, and when I was at Delhi in the middle of April I got the general impression that whilst nobody had any intention of proposing to India that she should remain in the Commonwealth, nevertheless if she of her own free will suggested that she do so, that we would be prepared to say 'yes.' In short, there seems to be a tacit assumption that it would be, if not in our own interest, at any rate to the mutual benefit of both countries, for India to remain within the Empire.

I have given a good deal of thought to this subject and I have very grave doubts if this tacit assumption is justified. I wonder if anyone has really made a cold, detached, analytical examination of the subject, whether, for example, the Chiefs of Staff have really considered what is involved, whether our own Cabinet has ever really weighed up the pros and cons. I very much doubt it.

It seems to me that in this changing world strategy is changing, and we must no longer ally ourselves to what in the past may well have been principles, but what today are mere shibboleths. We must align our thoughts to the changes which are taking place and, in particular, to the shrinking of our Empire, and we must have regard to the realities of the world situation as it confronts us to-day, or rather will confront us tomorrow.

No informed person can dispute that the only real potential danger to world peace in the next few decades comes from Russia. I use the word 'potential' because I am no alarmist and I do not think Russia is likely to go to war during, say, the next ten years. If Russia is a threat to the world in general, placed where she is geographically, she is a threat to India in particular, in fact in the foreseeable future, I think it fair to say that the only real threat to India is from Russia.

There has been so much talk about the gallantry of the Indian troops and the leadership which they have shown that there is a danger of people assuming that it follows that, given a little time, the Indian armed forces will be very strong. But the military strength of any country is relative, that is, relative to the threat which confronts it, and on that basis India (vast though its territory, enormous though its numbers, brave though its people) will be unquestionably the weakest military country in the world. Putting aside its problems of turning captains into majors-general overnight and ignorant coolies into highly qualified technicians, it has no scientific organization nor the knowledge that goes with it. It has no research organization nor the people qualified to undertake research. I doubt indeed if it will be able to provide the money for such an organization. It is, therefore, lacking in the very first requirement for any modern war. Secondly, its industrial potential is and will be for a very long time virtually non-existent. It will therefore be quite incapable of maintaining armed forces in action. Indeed, in brief, one may say that of all the numerous requirements which go to make for military efficiency, India will possess but one, that is, the courage of its people, and this unfortunate country finds itself

on the border of Russia, the strongest military power in the world. If Russia chose to invade India, it would virtually be the process of taking toffee from a child. These poor people would in effect go forth to battle equipped with a loin cloth and a spear.

And if it becomes necessary to introduce some form of Pakistan, the situation of Hindustan is (if indeed that is possible) even more powerless than that of a unified India. Not only would the existing defence forces be truncated, but the natural frontiers of India (whether NWFP belongs to Hindustan or Pakistan) would be in the hands of a potentially hostile State who could quietly penetrate into the plains of India and place themselves in time of peace in a perfect 'jumping off position'.

In past wars India has contributed man-power and materials of war, but in a new war where an invader will move with such rapidity, what hope is there of India being able to contribute anything to the common good?

There is one other aspect which merits some consideration. Our strategic interest is not so much that we ourselves as an Empire should possess this, that or the other country, but that we should deny to our potential enemies territory from which they could threaten our sea communications. An enemy in possession of India could undoubtedly threaten our communications, but we have to face cold hard facts. There is nothing that we could do to prevent Russia occupying India if indeed Russia wishes to do so, and India remaining within the Empire will not help one iota.

Surely it follows that if we take India into the British Commonwealth of Nations, we are taking, at least from the defence point of view, an ailing child who has literally nothing whatever to offer but who, on the other hand, constitutes a grave liability. We have seen two major wars in our lifetime. The one thing that our Empire needs is the means to recuperate from these awful losses—peace. How can we contemplate the risk of being involved in another war, by taking on this grave liability for the defence of India?

I have little doubt that amongst the realists in this country, these facts are beginning to be recognized, perhaps not in their stark reality, but sufficiently for the leaders to ponder and ask themselves whether there is a prospect of India achieving independence today and losing it tomorrow. I feel quite sure that a man like Jawaharlal Nehru, an interesting combination of a clear-headed realist and a not-so-clear-headed idealist, must be well aware of this menace which is hanging over this country. It must be quite apparent to him that the possibilities ahead of India are simply immense if only she can get security. I have little doubt that despite his published statements, many of which are bitterly anti-British, in fact he has many sentimental, cultural and emotional ties with our country and he realizes, indeed he cannot fail to realize, the great benefits which would accrue to India if she can remain in the Commonwealth, and indeed his only problem is how this could be done, consistent with some of the past statements of Congress.

It seems to me that there is, therefore, a distinct possibility in the near future that we may be faced with a request for India not to take its place formally as a member of the British Commonwealth, but for proposals to be put up which in effect would guarantee India all those advantages which accrue to members of the British Commonwealth, whilst at the same time preserving for her some form of independence. In other words, we may be asked to make a bargain. From what I have said it is evident that in my view the responsibility which we may be asked to undertake is so heavy, and its potentialities so grave, that it may well jeopardise the safety of our Empire. If we are to be asked to undertake such risks, surely we must know what India has to offer in return? I have discussed this question with many intelligent Indians

and the only answer I have ever received is, 'We have trade to offer'. But a closer examination will show that such a claim simply cannot hold water. Except for those ties of race, of affection and of loyalty to the Crown, and for certain preferences of mutual benefit to those concerned, we get no specific trade advantages with countries merely because they are within the Empire. Trade follows certain natural channels. It is unquestionably true that it is of vital importance to us to be able to find a wide and increasing market for our goods in India. It is equally true that if India is to live, let alone develop, she must import the type of goods which we provide. It is true she can import them from countries other than ours, but I have little doubt that for a variety of reasons too detailed to specify, a large proportion of India's trade will continue to be done with England, and if there was any unwillingness on her part to do so, the existence of the sterling balance would determine matters for very many years to come. It follows, therefore, quite clearly that India has nothing whatever to offer in exchange for any help we may be asked to give in the way of defence obligations. In the foreseeable future, India cannot conceivably be anything other than a weakness and an anxiety to other members of our Commonwealth.

I think that people like you and me who have recently come to India not only with no prejudice against this country but with a passionate desire to do all we can to atone for the mistakes we have made (whilst being justly proud of our achievements) may be perhaps a little inclined to lose our judgment. We are so anxious to go more than half way to meet our Indian friends, indeed as the Americans say, 'To lean over backwards,' so anxious to hold out a helping hand wherever we can, that we run the risk of being perhaps a little impetuous. I would beg of you to restrain your boundless enthusiasm and, in an endeavour to do what is best for this country, not to overlook what is good for our own Commonwealth.

Yours sincerely,
Archibald Nye

36. Partition of Punjab and Bengal Opposed by Jinnah

Letter from M.A. Jinnah to Winston Churchill, 2 May 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 680–2.

10 AURANGZEB ROAD,
NEW DELHI, INDIA,

Dear Mr Churchill,

I thought I should send you the accompanying statement that was issued by me recently¹, as perhaps your attention may not be drawn to the full text.

I hope you will give very careful consideration to it, as I understand His Majesty's Government are about to take their decision regarding the grave issues that are facing us.

Yours sincerely,
M.A. JINNAH

Rt Hon'ble Winston S. Churchill,
Leader of the Opposition,
Houses of Parliament,
London.

¹ For the full text of this statement, see report in *Dawn*, 1 May 1947 earlier.

37. Appeal Not to Partition Punjab

Record of an Interview between Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Louis Mountbatten,
3 May 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 193, NMML.

TOP SECRET

She told me how very distressed Mr Gandhi had been that the highly secret information of his difference of opinion with some of the Congress leaders, over the plan he had outlined to me when I first saw him, should have leaked out to the Press. He was highly indignant at these leakages, and she knew he would be in sympathy with my indignation at the leakage and blackmail in the *Hindustan Times* today.

She told me she was herself a Punjabi, and appealed to me not to agree to the partition of the Punjab.

I pointed out my position, and said that the very last thing I wanted was partition in any part of India. I asked her whether an offer of independence to the Punjab would save its unity. She felt that it might be a solution, and said she would recommend it to Mr Gandhi.

She urged me on no account to fall into the trap of making a decision on behalf of the British Government which would ultimately be regarded as a very wrong decision should it be in favour of the partition of India.

I thanked her for this advice, and told her that I had been alive to this point of view from the very beginning and that this was my policy—to base the final decision on the will of the people of India.

38. Divided India Would Be Followed by Fragmentation of States

M.K. Gandhi's Talk with Kiran Shankar Roy, 3 May 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 402–3.

Bhangi Nivas, New Delhi

If the British want to give us swaraj after large-scale massacre and migration of population, we do not want it. Jinnah Saheb has stated that full protection will be given to the minorities in Pakistan but it is only a verbal assurance and has not been put into practice. It therefore becomes the duty of the British to remonstrate against the injustice being done to the minorities. The Viceroy should issue a statement to the effect. But I don't see any move in this direction. Maybe, I am growing old and becoming senile. I am, therefore, left all alone to plead for my line of thinking. Gurudev's *bhajan—Ekla chalore*—is my only consolation. Now my only wish is to sacrifice myself in this effort. If nothing else, God will at least grant me this wish. Remember, if you divide India today, tomorrow provinces and states will be fragmented into smaller parts. And thus Rajputana, Gujrat, Bihar, Delhi, Maharashtra and the Punjab also will follow suit. We might escape its consequences because we are on the brink of death but generations to come will curse us at every step for the kind of swaraj we shall have bequeathed to them.



39. 'Their Latest'

Editorial from *Dawn*, 4 May 1947.

If as the Supreme Commander of South-East Asia Lord Mountbatten had left any 'war strategy' unlearned, now is the time to complete his education! All he has to do is to watch the big guns of Hindu propaganda turn now on one 'eneiny' and now on another, with carefully worked out timing. The broadside against the territorial integrity of Pakistan was accompanied by point blank fusillades at League leadership, particularly the Qaed-e-Azam. The objective on this 'perimeter' was of the nature of 'softening operations'. The new stunt of the dismemberment of Bengal and the Punjab was to be given the appearance of a settled fact; the Muslim League was to be demoralized into giving up the Pakistan demand. Success having been far from conspicuous on this front, new strategy has been evolved with none else than Lord Mountbatten as the target. The first volley has been fired from Mr Birla's gun-turret. Says his paper: 'For the first time since Lord Mountbatten assumed Viceroyalty the feeling that he may not be playing fair has come among some Congressmen and Sikh leaders'.

Whether this formidable shell manufactured in the *Hindustan Times* Ordnance Factory 'By Our Special Representative' has registered a hit or a miss in Viceroy's House is not known. After all, one who has been a Supreme Commander presumably keeps his defences properly manned. In fact, a Vicerine with the drive, resourcefulness and record of war service such as Lady Mountbatten has, should be able to keep the Viceregal defences also well womanned. We do not imagine, therefore, that these gun-men of the Congress will get much change out of the present occupant of Viceroy's House through tactics such as these. Nevertheless, this should make Lord Mountbatten's knowledge of men, matters and methods grow from more to more.

And why all this hullabaloo that the Viceroy is about to be unfair to Congressmen and Sikhs? The reasons given are (1) his 'reported attitude towards the Frontier Ministry', and (2) his 'plan to divide the Punjab into 12 non-Muslim and 17 Muslim districts thereby dealing a blow to Sikh interests'. With regard to the first, we do not wish to anticipate events which are moving fast; but assuming that the Viceroy is about to take certain decisions in the interest not only of peace and tranquility but also of justice and democracy, which may lead to the exit of the present Frontier Ministry, why should it be an act of unfairness? The answer of course is that the Congress (which means the Caste Hindus), like the King, can do no wrong. What it says is necessarily right, what it demands must be necessarily conceded. Anyone who disagrees is unfair, unreasonable, intransigent, reactionary and all manner of other things. The Frontier Ministry may have become a political scare-crow which does not even scare the... the masses of people in the Ministerial landscape must be rid of this ugly anachronism; by all canons of democratic Government fresh elections may have become inevitable and imperative. But none shall intervene to set the wrong right because the Congress will not have it. Lord Mountbatten must forget what he saw, heard and felt during his recent visit to that troubled territory; he must instead see through Congress eyes, hear through Congress ears and learn through the Congress mind. If he does not do so, the multi-millionaire-controlled Congress Press will ransack the English dictionary for all the uncomplimentary adjectives and hurl them at his undevoted head.

As regards the 'great injustice' which Lord Mountbatten is reported to be contemplating, namely giving *only* 12 districts of Pakistan to Hindustan, how cleverly does Hindu propaganda divert attention from the fact that if even a single district of the Punjab is taken away from the

Muslim national State it will be an act of gross injustice not to the Hindus and Sikhs but to the Musalmans! What Hindu propaganda is obviously attempting to achieve is to make sure that at least these 12 districts are annexed by the Hindus, and to that end they are putting their demand much higher and condemning the Viceroy in advance for not agreeing to that monstrous proposition. If indeed it is true that division of the Punjab has been recommended by Lord Mountbatten on the basis of only 17 districts remaining in Pakistan, it is the Muslims who must bestir themselves and prepare to resist the outrage at any cost. The Muslim nation cannot consent to a single tehsil belonging to its homeland being severed from it and given away to Hindustan. If, such a mutilation of Pakistan is attempted, Britain may well write off peace from the Indian sub-continent for endless years to come. In that event we clearly foresee a prolonged struggle for the preservation of the territorial integrity of the Muslim State. Where it will lead to we dare not predict. It is for Lord Mountbatten to take all these factors into account before finally making up his mind. The Muslim mind has, of course, been made up long ago.

40. Gandhi on Partition, British Withdrawal and Indo-British Relationship

M.K. Gandhi's Interview to Reuters, 5 May 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 415–17.

DOON CAMPBELL: Is the communal division of India inevitable? Will such division solve the communal problem?

GANDHIJI: Personally, I have always said 'No', and I say 'No' even now to both these questions.

Do you subscribe to the opinion that Britain will be morally obliged to stay on in India if the outstanding Hindu–Muslim differences have not been resolved by June, 1948?

This is a question that had never been put to me before. It would be a good thing if the British were to go today—thirteen months means mischief to India. I do not question the nobility of the British declaration, I do not question the sincerity of the Viceroy, but facts are facts. Neither the British Cabinet nor the Viceroy, however outstanding he may be, can alter facts. And the facts are that India had been trained to look to the British power for everything. Now it is not possible for India to take her mind off that state all of a sudden. I have never appreciated the argument that the British want so many months to get ready to leave. During that time all parties will look to the British Cabinet and the Viceroy. We have not defeated the British force of arms. It has been a victory for India by moral force. Assuming, of course, that every word of what has been said is meant to be carried out, then the British decision will go down in history as the noblest act of the British nation. That being so the thirteen months' stay of the British power and British arms is really a hindrance rather than a help because everybody looks for help to the great military machine they have brought into being. That happened in Bengal, in Bihar, in the Punjab, and in the North-West Frontier Province. The Hindus and the Muslims said in turn: 'Let us have the British troops.' It is a humiliating spectacle. I have often said before but it does not suffer in value through repetition because every time I repeat it, it gains force: the British will have to take the risk of leaving India to chaos or anarchy. This is so because there has been no home rule; the [rule] has been imposed on the people. And, when you voluntarily remove that rule there might be no rule in the initial state. It might have

come about if we had gained victory by the force of arms. The communal feuds you see here are, in my opinion, partly due to the presence of the British. If the British were not here, we would still go through the fire, no doubt, but that fire would purify us.

What sort of Indo-British relationship do you envisage after June, 1948?

I envisage the friendliest relationship between Britain and India assuming that a complete withdrawal takes place with complete honesty behind it—no mental reservations of any kind whatsoever.

Does the clause incorporated in the Draft Constitution on the abolition of untouchability in itself represent a great reform?

No. That clause does not represent a great or any reform. It registers the fact that a great revolutionary reform has taken place in Hindu society. I confess that untouchability has not yet been pulled out root and branch from the soil. Like the evil effects of the British connection, those of untouchability, a much older institution, do not disappear in a flash. It may take some years, perhaps, before a stranger coming to India can say there is no untouchability in any shape or form.

Do you believe the United Nations Organization, as at present constituted, can maintain a lasting peace?

No. I fear the world is heading towards another showdown. It is a fear that permeates many minds. But if all goes well in India, then the world may have a long peace. It will largely depend on the manner in which India takes it. And that will depend largely on British statesmanship.

What is the solution to the Palestine problem?

It has become a problem which is almost insoluble. If I were a Jew, I would tell them: 'Don't be so silly as to resort to terrorism, because you simply damage your own case which otherwise would be a proper case.' If it is just political hankering then I think there is no value in it. Why should they hanker after Palestine? They are a great race and have great gifts. I have lived with the Jews many years in South Africa. If it is a religious longing then surely terrorism has no place. They should meet the Arabs, make friends with them, and not depend on British aid or American aid or any aid, save what descends from Jehovah.

41. HMG Should Avoid the Term 'Partition'

Extract from a Letter from Horace Alexander (Probably to Agatha Harrison), 5 May 1947

TOP, Vol. X, pp. 616–17.

NEW DELHI

... 'I want to get across certain things while Ismay is in London, very urgent for those who may be preparing statements or speeches.

First, don't be too worried about Gandhi's Reuter statement. Quite frankly, I think he confuses the inviolable human unity of India with things like political frontiers. But it's all right. He knows he has failed to convince his Congress colleagues, and he returns sorrowful to his heroic work in Bihar—turning his back gladly on the unrealities of Delhi.

Secondly, let the word *partition* be avoided at all costs. Division is a word that does not arouse the same passions, though for practical purposes it means the same.

Third, there must be no hanky-panky about the NWFP.'

42. Gandhi's Thoughts on Pakistan

M.K. Gandhi's Talk with Local Muslims in New Delhi, 7 May 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 426-8.

Asked ... whether Pakistan would die a natural death if conceded, Gandhiji's reply was:

Can you describe Pakistan to me? What reply can be given to an unknown premise? I have tried to understand what it is and have failed. And if the Punjab and Bengal today are hall-marks of Pakistan, then it can never exist.

I cannot understand the meaning of Pakistan. Should Pakistan be attained after so much blood-shed? I am the lone follower of my ideas. Maybe, my intellect is deadened by old age! Still, how can I help mentioning the facts? Since I regard myself as a servant of the nation I would be betraying the faith of the people if I did not express what is in my heart. Personally I will say that the matter concerning the partition of the provinces should be decided by us peacefully after the British have withdrawn and with mutual consultation. Why should we have the British between us? Keeping them between us is an indication of our cowardice and mutual lack of trust. Is it a matter of any credit if two brothers take their quarrel to a third man and seek judgment from him? Moreover I am surprised that no one stops to think that the British would exploit to their advantage this weakness of ours. Looking up to the British for every little thing dissipates our strength and cripples us. I would say even with regard to the Princely States that they are in such a helpless state that I pity them. The British were their protectors. Now, if they want to be happy they will have to be part of India and become servants of the nation handing over their powers to the people....

There was a time when Great Britain was considered the Empress of the Oceans. There was none to contest her claim. Hence if Britain maintains true and honest friendship with India, she will attain the highest moral stature and the world will bow before her. Not only that, she will attain a position even higher than that of an Empress and all countries will have to look to her to shape the future of the world. This is because I know from experience that the British do possess these qualities and powers. I have lived among the British for many years and a large number of Englishmen and women are my friends.

I have passed some of the best years of my life among them and I have always voted against the name of 'Perfidious Albion' for them and have preferred to subscribe to Cowper's well-known verse 'Hypocrisy is an ode to virtue'. But Britain has yet to rise to those heights.

43. 'Gandhiji Meets Mr Jinnah: League Leader Harps on Pakistan'

Extract from a Report from *The HindustanTimes*, 7 May 1947.

The meeting between Gandhiji and Mr Jinnah, which took place on Tuesday evening lasted over two hours and 45 minutes. Gandhiji arrived at Mr Jinnah's house punctually at 5.30 p.m. and was received at the gate by Mr Jinnah's secretary.

After the meeting, Mr Jinnah issued the following statement to the Press which, he said, had the approval of Gandhiji: 'We discussed two matters. One was the question of division of

India into Pakistan and Hindustan and Mr Gandhi does not accept the principle of division. He thinks that division is not inevitable whereas in my opinion not only Pakistan is inevitable but this is the only practical solution of Indian political problem.

‘The second matter which we discussed was a letter which we both have signed jointly appealing to the people to maintain peace and we both have come to the conclusion that we must do our best in our respective spheres to see that appeal of ours is carried out and we will make every effort for this purpose.’

Gandhiji left Bhangi Colony for Mr Jinnah’s residence immediately after the Working Committee had concluded its emergency session which lasted about two hours. Eight members of the Working Committee—Acharya Kripalani, Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mrs Sarojini Naidu and Mr Shankerrao Deo—attended the session. Gandhiji was present at the meeting throughout. Mr Jagjivan Ram and Qazi Attaullah Khan, Frontier Congress leader, attended the meeting by special invitation.

The unexpected decision to call a meeting of the members of the Working Committee present in Delhi, is believed to have been taken only a few hours before the Committee met.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had prolonged discussions with Gandhiji on Monday night. Four top-ranking Congress leaders, Acharya Kripalani, Maulana Azad, Dr Rajendra Prasad and Mr Shankerrao Deo, called on Gandhiji on Tuesday morning, presumably to discuss the proposed meeting between him and Mr Jinnah....

44. Nehru and Patel Willing for a Form of Early ‘Dominion Status’

Telegram from Louis Mountbatten to H.L. Ismay, 8 May 1947

IOR, R/3/1/153, Acc No. 3467, NAI.

MOST IMMEDIATE

SIMLA

SECRET

I would like you to distribute copies of V.C.P. 40 to the Cabinet Committee and inform them that Patel and Nehru have now themselves indicated through V.P. Menon a desire for a form of early Dominion Status (but under a more suitable name) at least until a new Constitution has been fully framed which is unlikely to be for some considerable time after June 1948.

2. We shall spend the weekend working out details with Nehru and obtaining Patel’s concurrence. A further telegram will be sent to you on Sunday.

3. If this comes off it will not only produce a sporting chance of the main Union of India remaining indefinitely in the Commonwealth; but will also get over the difficulty of Jinnah having already indicated Pakistan’s insistence on not being kicked out of the Empire. It will also largely solve the problem of those Indian States which refuse to join a Constituent Assembly.

4. I know that at the time that you and Abell left it did not seem that this scheme could be pulled off but the situation has been completely changed by Patel and Nehru coming forward themselves. This is the greatest opportunity ever offered to the Empire and we must not let administrative or other difficulties stand in the way. I rely on you both to give this your full backing.



45. Partition of Punjab and Bengal Is 'Wrong in Every Case'

Letter from M.K. Gandhi to Louis Mountbatten, 8 May 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 434–7.

ON THE TRAIN TO PATNA

Dear friend

It strikes me that I should summarize what I said and wanted to say and left unfinished for want of time, at our last Sunday's meeting.

I

Whatever may be said to the contrary, it would be a blunder of the first magnitude for the British to be a party in any way whatsoever to the division of India. If it has to come, let it come after the British withdrawal, as a result of understanding between the parties or of an armed conflict which according to Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah is taboo. Protection of minorities can be guaranteed by establishing a court of arbitration in the event of difference of opinion among contending parties.

2. Meantime the Interim Government should be composed either of Congressmen or those whose names the Congress chooses or of Muslim League men or those whom the League chooses. The dual control of today, lacking team work and team spirit, is harmful for the country. The parties exhaust themselves in the effort to retain their seat and to placate you. Want of team spirit demoralizes the Government and imperils the integrity of the services so essential for good and efficient government.

3. Referendum at this stage in the Frontier (or any Province for that matter) is a dangerous thing in itself. You have to deal with the material that faces you. In any case nothing should or can be done over Dr Khan Saheb's head as Premier. Note that this paragraph is relevant only if division is at all to be countenanced.

4. I feel sure that partition of the Punjab and Bengal is wrong in every case and a needless irritant for the League. This as well as all innovation can come after the British withdrawal, not before, except always for mutual agreement. Whilst the British power is functioning in India, it must be held principally responsible for the preservation of peace in the country. That machine seems to be cracking under the existing strain which is caused by the raising of various hopes that cannot or must not be fulfilled. These have no place during the remaining thirteen months. This period can be most profitably shortened if the minds of all were focussed on the sole task of withdrawal. You and you alone can do it to the exclusion of all other activity so far as the British occupation is concerned.

5. Your task as undisputed master of naval warfare, great as it was, was nothing compared to what you are called to do now. The single-mindedness and clarity that gave you success are much more required in this work.

6. If you are not to leave a legacy of chaos behind, you have to make your choice and leave the Government of the whole of India including the States to one party. The Constituent Assembly has to provide for the governance even of that part of India which is not represented by the Muslim League or some States.

7. Non-partition of the Punjab and Bengal does not mean that the minorities in these Provinces are to be neglected. In both the Provinces they are large and powerful enough to

arrest and demand attention. If the popular Governments cannot placate them, the Governors should during the interregnum actively interfere.

8. The intransmissibility of paramountcy is a vicious doctrine, if it means that they can become sovereign and a menace for independent India. All the power wherever exercised by the British in India must automatically descend to the successor. Thus the people of the States become as much part of independent India as the people of British India. The present Princes are puppets created or tolerated for the upkeep and prestige of the British Power. The unchecked powers exercised by them over their people is probably the worst blot on the British Crown. The Princes under the new regime can exercise only such powers as trustees can and as can be given to them by the Constituent Assembly. It follows that they cannot maintain private armies or arms factories. Such ability and statecraft as they possess must be at the disposal of the Republic and must be used for the good of their people and the people as a whole. I have merely stated what should be done with the States. It is not for me to show in this letter how this can be done.

9. Similarly difficult but not so baffling is the question of the Civil Service. Its members should be taught from now to accommodate themselves to the new regime. They may not be partisans taking sides. The slightest trace of communalism among them should be severely dealt with. The English element in it should know that they owe loyalty to the new regime rather than to the old and therefore to Great Britain. The habit of regarding themselves as rulers and therefore superiors must give place to the spirit of true service of the people.

II

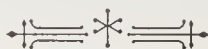
10. I had a very pleasant two hours and three quarters with Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah on Tuesday last. We talked about the joint statement on non-violence. He was agreeably emphatic over his belief in non-violence. He has reiterated it in the Press statement which was drafted by him.

11. We did talk about Pakistan *cum* partition. I told him that my opposition to Pakistan persisted as before and suggested that in view of his declaration of faith in non-violence he should try to convert his opponents by reasoning with them and not by show of force. He was, however, quite firm that the question of Pakistan was not open to discussion. Logically, for a believer in non-violence, nothing, not even the existence of God could be outside its scope.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur saw the first eight paragraphs, the purport of which she was to give to Pandit Nehru with whom I was to send you this letter. But, I could not finish it in New Delhi. I finished it on the train.

I hope you and Her Excellency are enjoying your hard earned rest.

Yours sincerely,
GANDHI



46. Nehru's Apprehensions regarding the New Proposals for Transfer of Power

Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten, 10 May 1947
IOR, R/3/1/151, Acc. No. 3819, NAI.

SECRET

SIMLA

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Thank you for your two letters dated 10th May which I have just received. As suggested by you, I am trying to get a meeting of the Congress Working Committee convened for the 16th or 17th May in Delhi. I have telephoned to Sardar Patel to this effect and I hope he will make the necessary arrangements. Gandhiji and Dr Khan Sahib are also being invited.

2. I am myself anxious that there should be no avoidable delay in coming to decisions and giving effect to them. I am anxious, however, that in our hurry a wrong step might not be taken which might lead to greater delay. I have been giving a great deal of thought to what you have told me and I find that my mind is not at all clear about the various possible developments. Apart from the original proposals which were put forward somewhat vaguely, there are now other suggestions in addition which introduce a great deal of complexity to the problems we have to face. Each step acts and reacts on the other and we have to consider carefully what the final outcome might be. I confess that I do not see much light and many things trouble me....

4. You will have seen Gandhiji's reactions and an interview that Sardar Patel gave yesterday. I doubt that the former should be given due weight, though in regard to some details it does not fit in with the general Congress viewpoint. Sardar Patel's interview is a clear expression of the Congress viewpoint.

5. What I fear is that if the new proposals are not generally agreed to and are a marked departure from the position which flowed from the Cabinet Mission's Scheme, they will result in producing a very great deal of uncertainty in the public mind. This will be unfortunate from every point of view. The Cabinet Mission's Scheme at least produced some certainty. If it cannot be applied *in toto*, it might be varied to suit the exigencies of the situation. Another landmark which brought some certainty was the declaration of February 20th. If anything happens to shake that feeling of certainty, there will be complete instability in the country. The new proposals, therefore, should fit in as far as possible, subject to necessary variations, with the position as it has been thus far.

Yours sincerely,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

47. V.P. Menon's Scheme for Transfer of Power

Extract from Minutes of Viceroy's Eleventh Miscellaneous Meeting, 10 May 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 196A, NMML.

Item 1

THE EARLY TRANSFER OF POWER ON A DOMINION STATUS BASIS

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY explained that Rao Bahadur Menon had been working on a scheme for the early transfer of power on a Dominion status basis long before he (His Excellency)

arrived in India. He said that he would like to give Rao Bahadur Menon an opportunity of explaining the outline of this scheme to himself and Pandit Nehru together.

RAO BAHADUR MENON said that he had mentioned the scheme to Pandit Nehru the day before; and also about four months previously to Sardar Patel. Both had appeared extremely anxious for the early transfer of power. Sardar Patel had the previous day issued a statement advocating that power should be transferred as soon as possible on a Dominion status basis. The scheme which he had prepared made arrangements for this in the alternative events of there being an united India and of there being two separate States—the Union of India and Pakistan.

RAO BAHADUR MENON explained that the Instrument under which the transfer would take place would be the 1935 Government of India Act with suitable modifications. The modifications which he envisaged were broadly as follows :

- (a) The Secretary of State, the India Office, and the special powers of the Governor-General and the Governors would disappear.
- (b) The Constituent Assembly would assume many of the responsibilities of the present Central Legislative Assembly.
- (c) There would be a Constitutional Governor-General of either United India or of the two States.
- (d) Governors would be appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Central Authority or Authorities.
- (e) In the event of partition, there would be a joint council to deal with matters of common concern between the two states; but there would be no interference by either State in the affairs of the other.
- (f) The preamble to the Act which would put these arrangements into force would contain reference to the Constituent Assembly and to the fact that these were interim arrangements until the new Constitution had been framed. This might not be finished until after June, 1948.
- (g) The word 'Emperor' would have to be dropped from the title 'King Emperor'. It would be revoked in an Order in Council by His Majesty.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY pointed out that at present June, 1948 was the latest possible date for the transfer of power. Under this scheme the transfer of power would take place much earlier. He considered that there should be a distinct target for the end of the interim period proposed under the scheme and had in mind that this target might be the completion of the framing of the Constitution and the holding of new elections thereunder.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that, whereas it seemed to him that it would be a fairly easy matter, so long as HMG agreed, to transfer power at a very early date on a Dominion status basis to the Union of India, there would be no authorities for some time in Pakistan to whom to transfer. He asked whether it would be possible for a Constitutional Governor-General of the Union of India to continue to exercise the special responsibilities of the Viceroy in Pakistan. RAO BAHADUR MENON said that he considered that this would be possible constitutionally. He pointed out that it might take eight or nine months for Pakistan to set up an Executive.

PANDIT NEHRU said that he considered it very desirable that there should be a transfer of power as soon as possible on a Dominion status basis. Congress had made a proposal to this effect at the beginning of the war. He would show His Excellency the statement which had been made.

The proposal had been repeated since. The basic reason for wanting an early transfer of power, apart from the desire of the Indians to control their own affairs, was that any developments in India would not otherwise take place properly. The present system of frequent references to HMG produce the psychology of always looking elsewhere for decisions; of continual bidding by the different parties; of a lack of reality; and of an absence of self-reliance. At present there were continual references to the British Cabinet, who were doubtless trying to do the fair thing but who could not be in full possession of the psychological background in India. Their mental processes were, in his opinion, inclined to be too legalistic and logical.

PANDIT NEHRU said that the only real difficulty in his opinion was the possibility of India being divided and Pakistan coming into existence. The normal course would have been for the Government of India Act to have continued subject to modifications and for any Dominion Government formed in India to continue to function for the whole of India. But it was now clear that facilities would have to be given for any part of India which did not wish to remain within the Union to separate. He considered that the Cabinet Mission Plan should be adhered to subject to the major variation that Provinces should be given the option to opt out of the Union. He considered that Provinces should be given an opportunity to see the new Constitution before given the chance of separation. It was in his opinion wrong to put the process of partition first. The proper thing would be that this choice should come when the broad outlines of the future Constitution were decided. According to precedent and practice that would be the more correct procedure. It was very difficult for the normal voter to decide the issue of Partition first except on an emotional basis.

PANDIT NEHRU said that he did not think that the process of granting Dominion status to one part of India before the other would give rise to any great complications. He supposed that this was theoretically possible. He presumed that as soon as a suitable authority had been set up in Pakistan power would be handed over. He also agreed with the point made by Rao Bahadur Menon that on the Joint Council there should be no interference by either State in the affairs of the other.

PANDIT NEHRU said that he did not, however, agree with Rao Bahadur Menon's estimate of the period involved. He had no doubt that the broad features of the Constitution of the Union of India would be prepared by July. The details would take another month or so to fill in, but it would be possible to proceed on the broad features, and electoral machinery could begin to function. It would take at the most six months or a year before the elections were held. Once power had been transferred it was up to the Government of the Union of India to arrange for all consequences of the transfer. The length of the interim period would depend on what arrangements were made. It might be felt desirable and more convenient not to put a final end to the interim period by June, 1948. But from the psychological point of view it was very dangerous at the present time to hint that the period might be prolonged thereafter. He considered that the interim period might well in fact come to an end when the elections were held, but it would be dangerous to say so at the present stage.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he did not consider that the target for the end of the interim period should in any way be connected with June, 1948. That had originally been the target date for transfer of power; and it was hoped to bring the transfer forward by almost a year.

PANDIT NEHRU gave his view that if the end of the interim period and the further decisions which would then be required were connected with specific contingencies, suspicion would be created. He considered that the end of the interim period should rather be connected with further arrangements in regard to Indo-British relations. Then the issue would be dealt with on the background of the future. He did not feel that this should be compromised by limitations.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY reiterated his view that the end of the interim period should be connected with some specific event. Possibly, if the new elections were not a suitable event, reconsideration or ratification by the newly elected Government might be. He pointed out that one of the main advantages accruing to India would be the retention of British officers. It was essential to have a new target date to work for by which they would be phased out.

PANDIT NEHRU said that he did not oppose His Excellency's viewpoint fundamentally, but to say that the date of June, 1948 had been scrapped would certainly create suspicion.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY pointed out that the Governor General would also have to have a specific date towards which to work. He added that if the target date related to reconsideration of Indo-British relations alone there might be considerable agitation for such reconsideration to take place immediately. He had in mind the name of Jai Prakash Narain in connection with such agitation.

PANDIT NEHRU said that he also of course wished to avoid such agitation but felt that it would be more likely to be directed against the idea that Congress leaders had consented to a semi-permanent form of Dominion status. He went on to say that Jai Prakash Narain had been behaving in a very irresponsible manner recently, but he was an intelligent and honest man. He, Pandit Nehru, had no doubt that Jai Prakash Narain would play an important part in India in the future. He thought that he could bring Jai Prakash Narain round to accepting a certain line of action but it would be essential for the latter to be able to see matters developing and to have faith in the development. He must see no opportunities for domination or exploitation. Once, however, the new Dominion status began to function a new atmosphere might well be created.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he agreed with Pandit Nehru but felt that his own object would be better served by indicating the end of the interim phase. If Jai Prakash Narain was suspicious of Pandit Nehru's motives, this suspicion might be allayed after a definite date of termination was laid down.

PANDIT NEHRU gave his opinion that the possibility of Pakistan being set up and the position of the Indian States as separate entities might produce an element of confusion and disruption. It would be of the greatest importance to maintain the closest relations between Pakistan and the Union of India and with the States. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that it might be possible that a Governor General might be able to help with these problems. If, however, the States thought that the period of Dominion status was to be indefinite they would on account of their dilatory methods never make up their minds.

PANDIT NEHRU said that he saw the force of His Excellency's arguments and was ready to agree that it might be desirable that the target date of termination of the interim period should be linked up with the formation of a new Government after elections. He went on to explain that, over the last many years, there had been a tremendous sentiment in India in favour of

complete independence. The words 'Dominion status' were likely to irritate because of past associations—although in theory it could be shown that Dominion status was equivalent to complete independence. Such fine points were not, however, considered or understood by the majority of the people. He was afraid that such phraseology might mean to many the continuation of indirect domination. He himself was most anxious, apart from sentimental reasons, to have the closest possible relations with the British Commonwealth, but he was not clear himself what form these relations would take. He thought and hoped that it would be possible for the relations to continue without the offending phraseology. He did not intend to talk about 'Dominion status' openly because of the many suspicions. He wanted to prepare the ground. The world was changing and the problem must be looked at in that context.

PANDIT NEHRU pointed out that under any form of Dominion status India would always have the power to leave the Commonwealth when she wished.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY agreed with this and pointed out that this fact should be emphasized as well as the target for the termination....

48. Discussion about Transfer of Power in Simla

Extract from a Letter from V.P. Menon to Vallabhbhai Patel, 10 May 1947
SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 111–18.

Simla

My dear Sardar,

I am sorry I could not write to you earlier. Ever since I came here on Wednesday last, I have been very busy, practically living in Viceregal Lodge. The immediate business was the amendments suggested in HMG's announcement. You are already aware of the substance of the announcement. There is no departure in the substance, only in the wording. The decision is that the legislatures of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam, divided according to Muslim and non-Muslim districts, should choose whether they would desire partition. For this purpose, the number of representatives to be chosen will be 4 per million of population and not 1 per million. The intention is to get a larger number of elected representatives as otherwise, on the Cabinet Mission's Plan, two members out of three in Sylhet will decide the issue of separation from Assam.

The paragraph in which you are most interested is that relating to the position of the NWFP. I attempted a draft in private consultation with Panditji [Nehru], though he made it quite clear that he was not in any way to be brought into it. The proposal I put forward was that the decision whether the NWFP should join the Indian Union or join the proposed Pakistan should be left to the last possible minute. After the provinces of Bengal, Punjab and Assam have decided on the issue of Pakistan, a referendum of the existing electors to the Provincial Legislative Assembly in the NWFP should be held. This referendum should be under the supervision of the Governor-General and after consultation with the provincial Government. It is very difficult to deny putting the issue to the electors and unless a decision is taken by the province, progress will be held up all along the line. The important consideration from your point of view is that it should not be related to the existing agitation. I know that HE would be prepared to go to the farthest extent to meet the Congress point of view in this respect. I have this morning attempted another draft on the basis of my proposal which [Sir Eric] Mievill

is taking to Panditji. It will be telegraphed to the Secretary of State today because the final approval of the Cabinet will be taken to the draft announcement tomorrow morning.

The plan was to call a meeting of the five, namely, Panditji, yourself, Jinnah, Liaquat Ali and Baldev Singh on the 22nd. This programme has now been advanced because Parliament is rising for the Whitsuntide recess on 22 May. The programme which has now been agreed is this. Ismay arrives on the 16th evening; on the 17th at 10.30 the conference meets: at that conference HE makes one more effort for the acceptance of the Cabinet Delegation's Plan. In all probability Jinnah will reject it. Then HE will give you five a copy of HMG's Plan. This you will take with you for consultation with the Working Committees and a meeting will take place again the next day to ascertain your views on important points. HE will also meet on the 17th some representatives of the Indian States to tell them what is going on. On the 18th, HE will hold a further meeting and go through the Plan paragraph by paragraph and finally telegraph to the Secretary of State the views expressed at the conference. This will be considered by HMG on the 19th and a decision will be communicated to HE on the 20th. HE will again summon the leaders at 5 o'clock on Tuesday, 20 May, and tell them of any alterations which may have been made in the Plan. The announcement will be made in Parliament on Tuesday the 20th followed up by HE's broadcast.

HE also asked me to discuss with Panditji the plan of parting with power early on the basis of a Dominion Status constitution. I attach a copy of a note which embodies the result of my conversation with Panditji. But when Panditji saw HE on the 8th, he gave HE the impression that he went back on what he told me. I then suggested to HE that it would be better to have a further meeting with Panditji. Accordingly, Panditji, HE, Mievile and myself had a discussion today. A detailed report is being prepared. I will show it to you when I come back to Delhi. The important points that were raised are as follows:

1. Dominion Status: Panditji agreed that it was essential that transfer of power should take place as early as possible. I mentioned at the conference the statement which you made on this question yesterday. There was some discussion as to how this period could be described. Ultimately it was decided that this interim constitution on a dominion basis should last till India was in a position to decide on the new Indo-British relationship after a Government under the new constitution was formed. This is quite satisfactory. In this connection Panditji raised the question whether it would not be possible to defer the question of partition till the existing Constituent Assembly had drafted a constitution so that, before any unwilling part of the country decided to remain separate, it would have an opportunity of seeing the new constitution. HE replied that this would mean delay and uncertainty. He stressed that we should not now delay the question of partition, which was in the best interests of India because he was sure that the truncated Pakistan, if conceded now, was bound to come back later. On the other hand, if there was delay, the uncertainty might lead to renewed agitation on the part of Jinnah and consequent deterioration in the political atmosphere. I agreed with HE's observations because our slogan should now be 'divide in order to unite.'

HE once suggested to me that he should invite you to Simla. When the conference was over, he told me that he should discuss the Dominion Status issue with you immediately on his return to Delhi. But I told him that before Ismay left London we should put the matter to HMG and start them working on the plan. I further suggested that there would not be any difficulty, in the event of partition, in giving Hindustan complete autonomy on a dominion basis, leaving Pakistan to take the same position when it was ready to do so. But, to tie both

of them to the same yoke would create difficulties for all concerned. I am pressing as hard as I can for parting with power at the earliest possible date. HE is on my side but I am not quite sure about his other Advisers. I hope I shall succeed if you also weigh in heavily on my side as Panditji did today.

Two things you have contributed have really anticipated the Muslim League moves. The first one was your agreement to the partition of the Punjab. This has put a stop to Jinnah's vague cry of Pakistan. Muslims have now started considering seriously whether Pakistan as such is practicable if it involves division of the Punjab and Bengal. This may lead to sober judgment when the time comes. Secondly, the Muslim League thought that you would stand firm on your Independence stand and therefore they tried to win over the British by professing readiness to accept Dominion Status for Pakistan. (Bhopal is behind this move.) By your statement yesterday and the Congress Working Committee's resolution, which you were responsible for passing, you have stopped this also. On the whole, I feel you are in a strong position now.

2. HE also raised the question of a Defence Council and the machinery to be employed to keep defence more or less on a unified basis for the time being and to divide it gradually in the event of division becoming inevitable.

3. You remember you wrote a letter to HE about getting an assurance from Jinnah that he would accept a truncated Pakistan. The same issue was raised by Panditji. HE was quite categorical; he said he knew how to deal with Jinnah if he repudiated the understanding which he gave HE that he would accept a truncated Pakistan. Panditji suggested that it would be better to get a written assurance from Jinnah. But HE made it quite clear that if Jinnah attempted to lead him up the garden path, Jinnah would find HE tough enough.

4. The next question Panditji raised was the possibility of civil commotion in case a truncated Pakistan was conceded to the Muslim League. HE told Panditji that he was going to write to the Governor of Bengal to suggest that whatever measures were required to cope with the situation should be taken even if the Ministry did not co-operate; and that his intention was to move two or three brigades to the Punjab and an equal number to Calcutta.

5. The paragraph in the announcement about the NWFP was then discussed, and, as I told you before, this paragraph is now being agreed with Panditji....

HE then asked Panditji to arrange for the [Congress] Working Committee to be in Delhi on the 17th and also that Khan Sahib should be summoned.

...The final version of HMG's statement is expected either this evening or tomorrow morning. I think I will show it to you on my return. I shall fully brief you before you go to the conference.

Yours sincerely,

V. P. Menon

Chapter 16. Making of the 3 June Plan

1. 'Sardar's Solution for Political Impasse'

Extract from a Report from *Bombay Chronicle*, 10 May 1947.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel declared today that the current British policy of 'remaining neutral but holding power is a way of propagating civil war' and asserted India's political impasse would be broken at once if power were transferred to the Central Government 'as it now stands.'

The Home, Information and Broadcasting Member said in an interview that functioning of India's Interim Government as a Dominion Government 'with the Viceroy standing out' would have two immediate results.

1. 'There would be peace in the country within a week. Those who commit acts of violence do so because they feel there is no strong Central Power to check them. With Dominion Status, the Central Government would form a strong Centre and would have the necessary power to put down disorder.'
2. 'Lacking interference by a third party to whom either side could appeal, the Congress and the Muslim League would settle their differences at once. If there are conflicts in the Cabinet over a question, the majority would rule.'

CONGRESS-LEAGUE SETTLEMENT

Particular significance was attached to Sardar Patel's statement in the light of a reliable report the Viceroy had sent word to His Majesty's Government that some action must be taken quickly in India to avoid a situation 'no one could control' and in view of Mahatma Gandhi's recently reiterated opposition to division of India.

Sardar Patel did not predict what type of settlement might be expected between the League and Congress over the issue of Pakistan if such a step were taken by the British Government. However, he said the Congress would not force any unwilling group or area.

He did say that Section 93 'would vanish in the Punjab' and the Congress and League would agree 'possibly to a coalition government.'

In the North West Frontier Province, where the League has carried on an agitation against the Congress Ministry for more than two months, Sardar Patel said, 'the Ministry would remain. The election was fought only last year on the issue of Pakistan and Congress won.'

Sardar Patel characterized the present situation in India as serious and said one of the grave problems was that of private armies now being raised and equipped.

TWO ALTERNATIVES

As an alternative in the event the British decided India must be divided, Sardar Patel suggested that power be transferred to the Constituent Assemblies, saying the Muslim League already has a plan for a separate Constituent Assembly.

‘The other way is much easier,’ he added, ‘Transfer power to the Central Government. Let the Viceroy stand out and not interfere. Then you have a strong Centre which would be capable of dealing with the problems facing the country, particularly in such places as the Punjab and the North West Frontier Province. Immediately there would be peace in the country.’

Sardar Patel reiterated the Congress stands for the May 16 statement ‘in toto’ and ‘in spite of its weakness Congress would like to have a strong Centre. It is absolutely essential that there be a strong army for defence and a strong Central Government.

‘The Congress position always has been that it will not coerce any group or area which does not want to remain. At the same time it will not be coerced by any group or community. Congress has accepted that principle since the Cripps Talks in 1942.

‘Therefore, if the League insists on partition of India, the same grounds on which it insists on partition apply in the Pakistan areas.’

JINNAH PLAYING DANGEROUS GAME

Sardar Patel remarked that ‘it is a dangerous game that Mr Jinnah is playing’ pointing out that the separation of Burma from India required two years. ‘And we had nothing in India’, he added.

He predicted it would take a long time, perhaps years to divide the Indian army, let alone separate communications, rail, roads and similar interlocking services which span India.

Of the Muslim League President Sardar Patel said that except for the League’s temporary acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan, Mr Jinnah’s position has remained the same.

‘We asked him to refer the question to the United Nations Organization’, Sardar Patel said. ‘He said “no”. We asked him to arbitrate. He said “no.”’

2. Nehru Fears the ‘Throwing Overboard of the Basic All-India Union’

A Note by Jawaharlal Nehru on the Draft Proposals, 11 May 1947

SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 131–3.

I have very carefully considered, in the short time at my disposal, the papers shown to me. They are of such far-reaching implications that it is difficult for me to deal with the subject adequately, and in any event a full consultation with my colleagues would be necessary. But as time is limited and any delay in a clear expression of opinion might lead to further steps being taken which may have grave consequences, I am giving below my immediate reactions.

2. Although I have had no opportunity of consulting my colleagues, I am quite clear that my reactions will be shared by them probably in a stronger measure. The first consideration of the papers produced a devastating effect upon me. The picture presented by the proposals was an ominous one and the whole approach to them appeared to me to be dangerous. Not only do they menace India but also they endanger the future relation between Britain and India. Instead of producing any sense of certainty, security and stability, they would encourage

disruptive tendencies everywhere and chaos and weakness. They would particularly endanger important strategic areas.

3. It is stated in the proposals that they have taken shape after full consultation with political leaders in India. That might lead people to think that they have the consent of those leaders. This would be completely wrong in so far as all leaders are concerned except possibly the Muslim League leaders. In our consultations we had proceeded on the present basis of the Cabinet Mission's plan and the statement of February 20th. Owing to stress of circumstances we had agreed to vary this basis to a certain extent, but the general approach continued to be the same. This variation consisted in the acceptance of the fact that certain Muslim majority areas might go out of the Union if they so willed. The Union was still the basic factor. In the new proposals the whole approach has been changed completely and is at total variance with our own approach in the course of recent talks. The proposals start with the rejection of an Indian Union as the successor to power and invite the claims of large numbers of successor States who are permitted to unite if they so wish in two or more States.

4. I have no doubt whatever that the announcement of this new policy and proposals by His Majesty's Government would provoke wide and deep resentment all over the country and no responsible leader of Indian opinion outside the Muslim League would be able to persuade the country to accept or even to acquiesce in them. It seems to me, therefore, essential that His Majesty's Government should be left in no doubt as to the total unacceptability of and opposition to both these proposals and the approach made in them, and also to the consequences which are bound to follow if His Majesty's Government were to persist in them.

5. Hitherto all British proposals and indeed all discussions have been basically on a United India, the inroads into such unity being confined either (a) to weakening the Centre and giving some sort of Group autonomy or (b) to giving the freedom to certain areas, which are demonstrably against joining the Union, to create themselves into separate States. The Cabinet Mission considered every aspect of a totally divided India and rejected it. Those considerations remain unchanged and indeed the disorder and violence of recent months add further weight to those considerations.

6. It must be remembered that the British Cabinet plan was accepted by all in India with the sole exception of the Muslim League and even the League had not at all times rejected it. Even today the League is prepared and continues to reap such advantages as it obtained for itself by joining the Interim Government on the basis of acceptance of the plan. The throwing overboard not only of the plan but all its basic conceptions namely the all-India Union and provincial independence to the utmost within that Union appears to be totally at the instance of one party alone in India. The Muslim League vetoes the plan and His Majesty's Government, therefore, throw it overboard. This step can only confirm the conviction widely held that no plan of His Majesty's Government can be accepted or proceeded with in the hope that His Majesty's Government will hold to it.

7. The present proposals virtually scrap the Constituent Assembly which includes all elements excepting the Muslim League, and deprive the Constituent Assembly of its essential character and reduces it to a body for preparing a scheme for the Union which these proposals negative.

8. This involves a complete going back by His Majesty's Government on its previous decisions in that (a) it throws overboard the Cabinet plan or at any rate its basic conception, (b) it violates its repeated pledge that it will not permit one party to exercise a veto, (c) it scraps

all that has been done under its own scheme and by arrangements made by the Governor-General himself to implement it.

9. It appears to me that the inevitable and obvious consequences of the proposals and the approach in them are (a) to invite the Balkanization of India, (b) to provoke certain civil conflict and to add to violence and disorder, (c) to a further breakdown of the central authority which alone can prevent the chaos that is growing, (d) to demoralize the army, the police and the Central Services.

10. The proposal that each of the successor States is to conclude independent treaties, presumably with His Majesty's Government also, which follows if the all-India Union is rejected as a basis and sovereignty reverts to the provinces, is likely to create many 'Ulsters' in India. This will be so considered by the people and deeply resented. The consequences of such resentment will be to add to the suspicions that exist and to create an almost unbridgeable gulf between National India and the British people in the future. The 'Ulsters' will be looked upon as so many British bases on Indian soil, possibly having British garrisons.

11. The approach to the Princes may be logical and consistent with the unfortunate position in respect of paramountcy. It shows, however, an obvious shift of emphasis and is a definite invitation to at least the major States to remain independent kingdoms, presumably as feudatories or allies of Britain. Also it is a definite incitement to them to play off Pakistan against the rest of India. This new emphasis will let loose in the States those forces which our moderate counsels and the hopes of their being part of an Indian Union are keeping somewhat in check. People's organizations everywhere demand union. The Rulers may resist them and will be encouraged to do so by this new emphasis in the proposals. In the States themselves there may well be civil war.

12. The proposals in respect of the Indian States also reverse the approach in the Cabinet plan wherein it is obviously indicated that the all-India Union is a Union of States as well, though their union under one Centre must be by voluntary accession. Machinery for this was provided in the Negotiating Committee.

13. The acquiescence on our side to the split-up of certain areas, which are predominantly League in their loyalty, was in no ways an acquiescence in throwing overboard the all-India basis of future settlement. It was only a stretching of the Cabinet plan to make opting out operable now and an adhesion to our oft-repeated policy that we do not wish to coerce any part of India. Further the partition of provinces to which we agreed also was for the same reasons, and we hold that such partition is consistent with an all-India Union of both separated parts with the retention of separate identities. If so desired by these parts they could go out of the Union.

14. It follows, therefore, and this has to be emphasized as His Majesty's Government appears to imply that we have acquiesced in a rejection of the Cabinet plan and in making the Union a later step by self-determination. We have not agreed to anything of the kind and any step that we have taken, often against our will and against the presence of national feeling in India, is to accept more and more completely the Cabinet plan which provides for the basic all-India Union.

15. It is difficult to go into the details of the proposals in the time available and within the compass of a note. But I might mention that the proposal about the so-called self-determination about Baluchistan seems to me to be preposterous. It leaves the future of that province to one man chosen by a group of Sardars and nominated persons who obviously represent a vested semi-feudal element. Baluchistan has an importance also as a strategic frontier of India and its future cannot be dealt with in this partial and casual manner.

16. If Assam has to surrender a part to Bengal, and we are not opposed to this if the people concerned so wish, it stands to reason that some such procedure is equally applicable to parts of Sind.

17. The proposals about the North-West Frontier Province in various forms have been repeatedly discussed by us and I have pointed out to you our strong objection to anything which places a premium on violence and may well invite civil war. We have agreed that the Frontier Province, like other areas, should be given full opportunity to express its own opinion about the future. But this must be done at the proper time and in the proper context in common with other parts of India. Otherwise that assessment of opinion itself may be defeated apart from other consequences. In effect the present proposal implies a decision by His Majesty's Government that the province must reverse or at least be given an opportunity to reverse its present decision which is to remain in the Constituent Assembly. The sole reason for this appears to be the violence and rapine carried out recently in the province by adherents of the Muslim League or others. That violence has not stopped despite Mr Jinnah's appeal. This may mean that the violent elements are not in control of the League or that the League leaders are not anxious to stop them. The proposal about the Frontier spotlights the province and proceeds on the assumption that extra-constitutional violence can declare null and void previous and recent decisions arrived at by constitutional procedure.

18. In regard to the treaties with the tribes of the Frontier, these are presumably with the Government of India. We recognize the independence of the tribes and their freedom to make treaties as they like. But even in the case of a properly constituted State on the frontiers of a country and integral to its defence and territorial integrity, the alliance of such a State with another party is recognized as being the concern of the given State with which it has been associated. In the present case this would be India. To give public assurance to the tribes that they can have treaties with whomsoever they like is to invite them to profit by internal difficulties in India and also to create a situation in the Indian frontier which menaces India as well as neighbouring areas in Asia. The Tribal and Frontier areas have been maintained by the expenditure of vast amounts of money from all-India because of strategic and other reasons. Further, if the North-West Frontier Province remains with the Union, an alliance between the Tribal Areas and another State will create grave difficulties for the North-West Frontier Province and India as a whole.

19. His Majesty's Government wishes to declare that the sole purpose of the procedure indicated in the proposals is to ascertain the wishes of the people of India and to transfer power with the least possible dislocation. These purposes will not be advanced or even achieved by the proposals. As I have indicated above, the proposals will encourage chaos and disorder and the belief that violence pays will prevent any proper assessment of opinion. Before the people choose they must have a proper picture as to what they are to choose. Two or three vague proposals without this clear background will produce confusion and may share the character of merely demagogic appeals. The transfer of power, instead of being made without dislocation, will be obstructed by violence, by a mass of complications, and by the weakness of the Central Government and its organs.

20. If there is to be any genuine assessment of opinion, the only practicable way is for two constitutions, two appeals and two prospects to be placed before the people. This means that (a) the Constituent Assembly must proceed with the constitution-making on the basis of an all-India Union with full freedom for provinces and effective guarantees for all, (b) equally the

League can prepare its own schemes and present its own proposals on an equal level, (c) the two constitutions may be presented to all the provinces of India on a plebiscite basis on such terms as are agreed upon.

21. Until these decisions are made, the Government of India must remain as one. In view of impending British withdrawal, the Coalition forming the Central Government must be a Cabinet with joint responsibility based upon full Dominion autonomy. It may be made clear that the Central Government will not take any steps to prejudice self-determination or subsequent partition and such other guarantees as are necessary may also be given so as to assure the League in regard to certain agreed matters. It may, for instance, be stated that in regard to certain questions they should not be decided by a mere majority in the Cabinet. Some machinery for adjudication in regard to these questions can be set up.

22. This has become a very long note hastily prepared and yet it has not dealt fully with all the aspects of the problem. As I have said above, the fullest consideration by all concerned is necessary before any commitments can be made. It is obvious that there can be no imposed solutions of our problems and any attempt to do so will lead to further difficulty. Whatever the views of my colleagues might be in regard to various details of the proposals, I have no doubt that their main reaction will be as I have indicated above. That is that they cannot accept these proposals and they are not prepared to acquiesce in the throwing overboard of the basic all-India Union or to accept the theory of provinces being initially independent successor States.

3. 'Speed Is the Essence of the Contract': Mountbatten's Plan

Telegram from Louis Mountbatten to H.L. Ismay, 11 May 1947

IOR, R/3/1/153, Acc No. 3467, NAI.

IMMEDIATE

1. I had a long and satisfactory meeting with Nehru, Merville and V.P. Menon yesterday (the minutes are being sent to you) on the possibility of an early transfer of power on a dominion status basis.
2. I want you, before you leave London, to explain the way my mind is working, as outlined in this telegram, to HMG and to find out what the reactions are. I would like you to obtain HMG's general approval to the line which I am taking. You must make them realize that speed is the essence of the contract. Without speed, we will miss the opportunity. I have just received your 6046 of 10th May with which I am delighted.

3. Date.

I am convinced that, in order to have the best chance of obtaining our long-term object, the grant of Dominion Status must take place during 1947.

4. Advantages.

The advantages which would accrue to India through an early transfer of power and remaining within the Commonwealth are obvious enough. I consider that the main advantage which the United Kingdom would gain are briefly:

- (a) the terrific world-wide enhancement of British prestige and the enhancement of the prestige of the present Government.
- (b) the completion of the framework of world strategy from the point of view of Empire defence.

- (c) the early termination of present responsibilities, especially in the field of law and order, which was stressed by Patel in his statement to the press on Friday. See my next telegram.
- (d) A further strengthening of Indo-British relations which have enormously improved since the statement of 20th February.

5. Modification to Government of India Act.

The instrument under which the transfer of power would take place would be the 1935 Act with certain modifications. For instance, the Secretary of State, the India Office, and the special powers of the Governor-General and the Governors would disappear. One constitutional Governor General could serve both parts of India. Governors would be appointed by him on the recommendation of the central Executives.

6. Difficulties.

There are difficulties which have got to be met. The main ones are

- (a) Defence and
- (b) The complications resulting from the partition of India.

7. Defence.

(a) British Forces.

I consider that the British Army should be phased out as soon as possible after the transfer of power. Until this process is completed, I should have to be given special powers in relation to the employment of British troops. The elements of the RAF at present planned to remain in India should do so, being transferred on loan to the RIAF.

(b) Indian Forces.

- (i) The process of nationalization of the Army would be slowed down. The period of compensation for British officers would be extended until such time as they can be released under a new plan.
- (ii) If partition of the Army is insisted upon, the process would take place in an orderly manner under a planned programme.
- (iii) During the interim period there would be a Defence Council consisting of myself as Chairman and one representative each from the Union of India and Pakistan.
- (iv) Defence Headquarters would also eventually be split. Until this process was complete it would be under the Defence Council.

8. Complications resulting from partition.

It is obvious that the Union of India will be ready to receive power before Pakistan. It may take 6–8 months for the latter to set up an executive for this purpose. I am, however, assured that the former need not wait upon the latter, and that I could be Constitutional Governor-General of the Union and my existing power could remain meanwhile for Pakistan.

9. Nomenclature

- (a) It is apparent that the words 'Dominion status' have an unfortunate association here. I would be grateful for any bright ideas you may come across to get over this difficulty.
- (b) The word 'Emperor' would have to be dropped from His Majesty's present designation of 'King-Emperor'.

10. Further steps.

I intend to see Patel about all this as soon as I get back to Delhi. I will not talk to Jinnah about it until after the announcement of the plan; and, although his reactions to anything are always quite unpredictable, he has already hinted strongly that Pakistan will wish to remain within the Commonwealth and therefore I do not anticipate any trouble as far as he is concerned.

11. Please circulate copies of this telegram and VCP 40 to Cabinet Committee. You may use my 28-SC of 8th May as you think fit.

4. 'League Will Resist Transfer of Power to Centre'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 11 May 1947.

New Delhi, Saturday.—**The Finance Member Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, stated tonight that Mr Vallabhbhai Patel's proposal that power be transferred by British to the Interim Government as it now stands was 'obviously intended to torpedo the Muslim demand for Pakistan.'**

The Finance Member who is also General Secretary of the All-India Muslim League, added in an interview that 'I should like to make it absolutely clear that whatever the alleged difficulties may be, the Muslims will never accept any solution of the Indian problem except on the basis of an independent and sovereign Pakistan.'

BRUTE MAJORITY

Mr Liaquat Ali Khan added that the League would resist any such transfer of power, adding that the Interim Government 'was formed under the present Constitution and any alteration in that basis will in fact mean the rule of the Hindu Congress at the Centre.'

Mr Patel has been quite frank about it where he says that 'if there were any conflicts in the Cabinet over any question, the majority would rule.' This dictum of Mr Patel's can easily be understood when it is remembered that his party has and will, in the present Cabinet, continue to have, this brute majority.

... 'Sardar Patel is yearning after a strong Central Government and he can hardly conceal his sinister desire to work the Congress machine of oppression with full force in all the provinces, particularly the Punjab the NWFP and other Muslim provinces.'

Mr Patel said the present situation in India was serious and that one of the problems was that of private armies being raised and equipped.

Mr Liaquat Ali Khan commented 'Mr Patel needs hardly to be told that this grave situation over which he has expressed concern is being created by no other than the Congress and other Hindu and Sikh organizations. It appears from Mr Patel's statement that he does not approve of the raising of private armies, but his profession is belied by the practice of his own party.'...

5. Jinnah Rejects Patel's Proposal

Statement by M.A. Jinnah, 11 May 1947

IOR, R/3/1/153, Acc. No. 3467, NAI.

My attention has been drawn to an interview given by Mr Patel to the A.P.A. His solution comes to this: that all power should be immediately transferred to the Central Government as it now stands and strong Central Government will then be able to maintain peace in the

country; and the Viceroy and every other authority under the present constitution should stand out and the Government of India Act of 1935 should cease to function. And then Mr Patel says, if there will be any conflict in the Cabinet over any question, the Congress brute majority will rule both in the Cabinet and the present existing legislature. Then he will proceed with the existing administrative machinery, which is to be handed over to him throughout the country, with the Police and the armed forces including the British troops, to put down everybody in the country and crush particularly the 100 million Mussalmans. This is his prescription and way of keeping peace.

I note that he has now developed a sudden affection for 'Dominion Status' and 'Dominion functions'. I wonder what has happened to the recent Resolutions passed by the Congress at its Sessions only a few months ago and the sister body, which the rump Constituent Assembly has now become, which is run by the Congress authoritative caucus, where they passed Resolutions solemnly deciding that India shall be an independent sovereign republic. The Muslim League will never agree to such a monstrous proposal as the one put forward by Mr Patel, to restore peace, which is only a dream of his.

Then he says that in case the British decided upon the division of India, power should be transferred to the Central Government and let the Viceroy stand out and not interfere, and he will have a strong Centre capable of dealing with the problems facing the country. This makes neither sense nor logic. If the British decide that India must be divided and it follows that the armed forces must be divided and power transferred to the divided parts then the Central Government must be dissolved and all power should be transferred to the two Constituent Assemblies formed and representing Pakistan and Hindustan. Mr Patel says the Congress has always proclaimed that it will not coerce any group or area which does not want to live with Hindustan, but what is the use of saying the Congress has proclaimed it will not coerce any group or area and all the time threatening those who want to separate with all sorts of consequences and obstructing and making it more and more difficult for them to separate in a friendly way.

It is quite obvious that Mr Patel and the Congress say that they will not compel any group or area to remain in Hindustan or use force but they are just the contrary. Why not agree? But now a new stunt has been started; that if you want division they will accept it, but we are told that it will result in the division of the Punjab and Bengal. This is another sinister move and he threatens that if non-Muslims are forced into Pakistan there will be civil war. Mr Patel cannot see that the demand for the division of India is based on the fundamental principle that we already have our national homelands, where we want to establish a national State. It is based entirely on a different principle as I have recently pointed out in a Statement of mine, whereas this new Congress stunt—the partition of Bengal and the Punjab—is started on the ground that the non-Muslim minorities there will not receive fair treatment from the Government of these provinces because the Muslims will be in a majority. The same argument applies with much greater force with regard to the Muslims and non-Caste Hindus in Hindu majority provinces, especially because the Muslims form a much smaller minority than the Hindus in Punjab and Bengal. This must lead to the fragmentation of several provinces—and this cannot be supported morally—and it is absolutely destructive—because it will lead to seriously breaking up the provinces economically; splitting up the Hindus and Sikhs and politically not only dangerous for the present but more so in the future.

The next point Mr Patel referred to was that division of India would be difficult to carry out by June 1948 and he visualized, perhaps, years to affect the division especially the army and emphasizes that the division of the army would cause delay. It is difficult for me to believe that His Majesty's Government has fixed the deadline of June 1948 at random. The issue of division of India has been before us since 1940 and the question of the division of defence was discussed threadbare with the Cabinet Delegation in March last year and for months before their departure. Since then the alternative of division of India has received the closest attention of His Majesty's Government and the army authorities. And when the White Paper of 20th February contemplated one of the alternatives that power is to be transferred to the provinces, surely they could not have overlooked the question of defence. Transfer of power without division of the armed forces is meaningless.

Besides, I see myself no difficulty in dividing the armed forces for Pakistan and Hindustan.

Lastly, Mr Patel wants to make out that he is all saint of reasonableness and that I am the devil. He says 'we asked him to refer the question to UNO. He says no, and we asked him to arbitrate, he again says no.' Either Mr Patel has not got a good memory or he deliberately wants to mislead the people in India and abroad. Last August Mr Patel accused me of what he called intransigent attitude on my part and in reply I pointed out that the demand of Pakistan was based on the right of self-determination, which is the birthright of Mussalmans and it is not and cannot be a justifiable issue. Any intelligent man would understand that the right of self-determination is an inalienable right of a nation and the recognition of the sovereignty of the people of that nation by a democratic process and it cannot be made the subject of vote of two nations Hindus and Muslims and such a process if adopted, the result is a foregone conclusion because there is a brute Hindu majority of 3 to 1. Nor can it be made subject of arbitration by any other means authority. Mr Patel knows it but he is repeating this song to confuse people here and abroad by misrepresentation.

6. Congress President Represents Congress

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten, 13 May 1947
TOP, Vol. X, p. 800.

17 YORK ROAD, NEW DELHI

May I suggest to you that in any conferences to which party leaders are invited, the President of the Congress should also be invited? He represents the Congress formally and officially. Others may be prominent Congressmen, but they have other capacities also and cannot be said to represent Congress formally. If the Congress President is not invited on such occasions, certain misapprehensions arise in the public mind and needless difficulties are created.

Yours sincerely,
 JAWAHARLAL NEHRU



7. Nehru Explains Reluctant Acceptance of Partition

Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Asaf Ali, 14 May 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 148–50.

New Delhi

My dear Asaf,

...4. As you must know, on June 2nd we are supposed to be meeting the Viceroy to learn from him what the tentative proposals of the British Government are in regard to further changes. No proposal of the British Government has much validity unless it is accepted by us. I cannot say now exactly what these proposals are likely to be and what our reactions to them will be. Mountbatten's approach is friendly and he wants to go ahead fast. But the India Office crowd and the British Cabinet still move in the old grooves. They are completely out of touch with recent developments in India, but they consider themselves experts who can lay down the law, especially Stafford Cripps.

5. The British Cabinet's Scheme of May 16th has, in fact, been functioning so far as we are concerned. The Constituent Assembly has been meeting and will, I hope, finish its work within a few months. Nevertheless, the Muslim League's boycott has prevented the Scheme from coming into full operation.

6. Meanwhile the situation in northern India and in Bengal is tense and volcanic. There is talk all round of civil conflict on a big scale and arms are being smuggled and manufactured. With this background some little spark may lead to a big blaze.

7. Because of all this we came to the regrettable conclusion that it is better to offer a division of those parts that want to go away from the Union of India. This inevitably involves a partition of Bengal and Punjab. There is at present a tremendous demand for this partition from the Hindus and Sikhs and this is being thoroughly opposed by the Muslim Leaguers. It is a curious reversal of the previous position. Suhrawardy goes about proclaiming that Bengal is one Nation. So also Shaukat Hayat Khan and Feroz Khan Noon declare that the Punjabis are one and cannot be separated. The two-nation theory evidently does not work in Bengal and Punjab.

8. I imagine that one of the alternative proposals of the Viceroy will be to give the right to provinces or parts of provinces to opt out of the Union or rather the proposed Union. Some machinery will be devised for this process which will enable Bengal and Punjab to be divided if the parts so desire it. Whether one likes this or not, this does give a large measure of self-determination to the people concerned. The Muslim Leaguers are for the first time up against the difficulty of having to choose between a truncated Pakistan with Bengal and Punjab divided and no Pakistan at all, that is joining the Union of India on the Cabinet plan basis.

9. I imagine that the former course is likely to be adopted whether the Muslim League agrees to do so or not, that is to say if they reject finally, as they are very likely to do, the Cabinet Mission plan. Once these decisions are made, they will be given effect to firmly.

10. There is also some talk of a transfer of power on the Dominion basis as far as possible, that is to say long before June 1948. The Dominion basis will, of course, only last till June 1948 and it will be up to us to lay down the terms of our relationship with England then. This must be on the basis of an Indian Republic though we may continue to have close contacts in many ways with England and the British Commonwealth of Nations. Much will depend on what happens in the course of the next year.

11. I have given you some brief idea of the possible shape of things to come, but you must appreciate that this is all vague and uncertain and you should keep it to yourself. The overriding factor today is the violence in the air and the possibility of a big-scale conflict in northern India. Whatever happens, we shall face it firmly.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. Report on Bihar Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bihar for the First Half of May 1947, c. Second half of May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI.

...MUSLIM LEAGUE.—A section of the Muslim League has been busy with the 'Partition of Bihar'. It is reported that in the Muslim area has been included the Patna and Purnea districts, South Bhagalpur, South Monghyr, Jehanabad and Nawadah Subdivisions and a portion of the sadar subdivision of the Gaya district. The Muslims of these areas will form a Union with Jharkhand creating an Independent Sovereign State.

Mr Jaffar Imam, the President of the Provincial Muslim League, has issued an appeal for two lakhs of rupees for organizing branches in different parts of the Province. It is reported that a sum of Rs 3,000 has been sent to the Punjab Provincial Muslim League for relief.

The League is still withholding co-operation in the matter of relief and reconstruction. In the Monghyr district there has, however, been a split. The extremist section is losing ground and there is a marked desire now among the Muslims in Tarapur to get their houses reconstructed as quickly as possible with Government assistance.

The League is now busy with making preparations for the Provincial League Conference at Kishanganj in the Purnea district. The Provincial Government have banned processions and drillings of volunteers which has agitated the Muslim League....

9. Nehru Suggests Changes in the Draft Plan

Note by Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten, 16 May 1947

IOR, R/3/1/150, Acc No. 3465, NAI.

SECRET

NOTE

1. The Congress fully accepted the Cabinet Mission's Scheme of May 16, 1946, and has since acted in accordance with its provisions. We stand by the Scheme still and we think that this should continue to be the basis of any change in the future. The Interim Government itself is an outcome of this Scheme.
2. While the Cabinet Mission's Scheme of May 16th has been functioning and been acted upon, it is true that the Muslim League has kept away from it. For the sake of a settlement with the League we are prepared to accept variations of the Cabinet Mission's Scheme though it must be understood that fundamentally that Scheme continues to function.

3. It is in this context that we have considered the plan which HMG propose to put forward. This plan, as we understand it, is a continuation of the Cabinet Mission's Scheme with suitable variation to fit in with the existing situation and in order to bring about an abiding settlement. We accept this plan generally but our acceptance is strictly subject to the other parties agreeing to it as a final settlement and that no further claims are put forward.
4. In the event of the Muslim League not agreeing to this plan, we must adhere strictly to the Cabinet Mission's Scheme of May 16, 1946, under which the Interim Government was formed. In this Interim Government there is no place for those who finally reject the Cabinet Mission's Scheme.
5. In accepting generally the plan which HMG propose to put forward, we should like to point out that in the event of the various partitions mentioned in that plan taking place, it follows that the clause in the Cabinet Mission's Scheme in paragraph 19 dealing with major communal matters has no further significance.
6. We would like the following variations made in the draft of the plan. These do not affect the essential nature and purpose of the plan.
 - (a) Paragraph 1 should read as follows 'On February 20, 1947, HMG announced their intention of transferring power in British India to Indian hands by June 1948. HMG had hoped that it would be possible for the major parties to cooperate in working out of the Cabinet Mission's Scheme of May 16, 1946, and evolve for India a constitution accepted to all concerned. This hope has not yet been fulfilled. HMG are, therefore, faced with the task of making further efforts to implement their intention of transferring power including such variations of the Scheme of May 16th and the adjustments consequent to them as would enable the major parties to cooperate in a peaceful transfer of power.'
 - (b) Paragraph 3. The reference to agreement with political leaders would be justified if there is a final settlement and all parties agree.
 - (c) Paragraph 4 should run thus: 'It is not the intention of HMG to interrupt the work of the existing Constituent Assembly, and HMG trust that, as a consequence of this announcement, the Muslim League representatives of those Provinces a majority of whose representatives are already participating in it, will now take their due share in its labours.' The rest of the paragraph will remain as drafted.
 - (d) Paragraph 7 is by no means clear. We do not object to it, but as drafted it may create all manner of difficulties.
 - (e) Paragraph 9. Who will decide the composition of the Boundary Commission? It should be stated quite clearly that the Boundary Commission will have to take into consideration many other factors also apart from the nature of the population.
 - (f) Paragraph 11. As stated in this paragraph, the referendum will be held in consultation with the Provincial Government. We cannot answer for the Provincial Government or commit it, but we are prepared to request them to agree to this procedure.
 - (g) Paragraph 13. There is a reference to the contiguous Muslim majority areas of Districts adjoining Sylhet. This reference seems to be unnecessary. The Boundary Commission will certainly have to take such matters into consideration not only in Assam but also in Sind.

- (h) Paragraph 16. This seems to be unnecessary here. We do not object to the idea underlying it, but it will be for us to consider later what is the best form of giving effect to it.
 - (i) Paragraph 19. We suggest that only the first three lines of this paragraph should remain and the rest should be deleted; further that the following addition be made after 'Indian States' in the 3rd line: 'as stated in the Cabinet Mission's Scheme of May 16, 1946'.
 - (j) Paragraph 20. In line 8 after 'new Constituent Assembly' add 'if formed'.
7. We have not seen the appendix giving the list of districts. As we have pointed out previously, the position of the Sikhs in the Punjab is a very difficult one under the scheme and every effort should be made to ease the under the situation for them. A suggestion was made and apparently accepted that in Gurdaspur District and others similarly situated the Hindu and Sikh representatives should go to the Eastern Punjab group and the Muslim representatives should go to Western Punjab. This may not be very logical, but it approaches somewhat a juster solution. It would be desirable to say something in the course of the document that the Boundary Commission should give due weight to all the factors and considerations advanced by various groups before coming to a decision; further that the notional division is entirely temporary for a particular purpose and no more.
 8. There is no mention in the document of the Chittagong Hill areas which are predominantly Hindu and Buddhist. These are Excluded Areas lying to the east of East Bengal. They have nothing in common with Chittagong District or with East Bengal. They will naturally line up with some of the Hindu States to the north of them and possibly with Assam.
 9. No mention is also made of other territories like the Andaman Islands. These also will naturally go with the Union of India.

Jawaharlal Nehru

10. Position of Assam in the Negotiations for Transfer of Power

Letter from Louis Mountbatten to Vallabhbhai Patel, 16 May 1947

SPC, Vol. IV, p. 35.

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi

Dear Sardar Patel,

Thank you for your letter of 1 May about the Cabinet Mission Plan, which I delayed answering until I had gone into the matter while at Simla.

2. It has always been clear that the Cabinet Mission Plan provided that the representatives of certain provinces should sit together in sections, and that those sections, operating by a simple majority vote, should have two main tasks:

- (i) to frame constitutions of provinces comprising the sections; and
- (ii) to decide whether or not to set up a group government under a group constitution.

3. Provinces would acquire the right to opt out of a group (if the section decided to set one up) only after the first elections held under the new constitution, which had been framed by

the section. There was never any question of the constitution being referred in the first instance to existing legislative assemblies for approval.

4. There always was inherent in this plan the risk that a provincial constitution might be rigged by the majority in a section; in the case of Assam, there undoubtedly has been a fear on the part of the present Assam Ministry that a constitution devised for Assam by Section C would be such as would in effect put them out of office. The answer to this is that they must trust the majority in Section C not to abuse its powers, in the same way as that majority in Section C would have to trust the Congress majority in the Union Assembly not to abuse its power in regard to the federal subjects, and other things.

5. This matter is of course most important from the point of view of both the major parties; and if only the position could be fully accepted and appreciated, there would still be a chance that the Cabinet Mission Plan could be made effective.

Yours sincerely,
Mountbatten of Burma

11. 'Announcement of HMG's Plan on May 17'

Extract from a Report from *The Hindustan Times*, 17 May 1947.

New Delhi, Saturday—ALL SPECULATION HAS BEEN SET AT REST BY THE ANNOUNCEMENT THIS EVENING FROM THE VICEREGAL LODGE, SIMLA, THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT PLAN FOR THE TRANSFER OF POWER TO INDIAN HANDS WILL BE MADE KNOWN ON MAY 17.

Lord Mountbatten will present the plan at the Viceroy's House in New Delhi to five leaders from British India headed by Pandit Nehru and later to the members of the States Negotiating Committee on behalf of the Indian states.

The wording of the 'communiqué', issued this evening suggested that the proposed meeting will not be a round table conference since the plan is in the nature of an 'award'.

The Viceroy is expected to appeal to the leaders concerned to accept the award and thus help relieve the tension in the country.

The *communiqué* runs: His Excellency the Viceroy has invited the following leaders to meet him at the Viceroy's House, New Delhi at 10.30 a.m. on Saturday, May 17.

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

MR M.A. JINNAH

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

MR LIAQUAT ALI KHAN

SARDAR BALDEV SINGH

He has also invited the representatives of the Indian States who were on the States Negotiating Committee to meet him, on the afternoon of that day.

The purpose of these meetings is to present to them the plan which HMG has now made for the transfer of power to Indian hands....



12. Nehru Comments on the Revised Draft Announcement¹

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten, 17 May 1947
IOR, R/3/1/150, Acc No. 3465, NAI.

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

V.P. Menon has shown me the latest draft announcement as well as draft proposals for the transfer of power during the interim period. I have made certain comments to him in regard to them. I repeat these points below so that they may be before you in writing for facility of reference.

Draft Announcement

Paragraph 1. There has been some improvement. But I must say that I dislike the last sentence. There is no point in it and it is somewhat of an irritant. As a matter of fact, there has been an agreement between the Congress and HMG on the basis of the Plan of May 16th as well as their declaration of December 6, 1946. It might be said that all parties in India have accepted and agreed to this with the exception of the Muslim League. To go on laying stress on political parties being unable to reach an agreement is neither fair nor completely correct. In any event, it is not a very tactful approach to the problem. I still think that the change I suggested in paragraph I would improve it.

Paragraph 4. There has been a considerable chance in this for the worse. Yesterday we were told that our suggestions had been accepted. Instead of that the whole structure of the sentence at the beginning has been changed laying emphasis on the exception rather than the rule. That exception has been dealt with separately later on in the document and there is no need to emphasize it right at the beginning of the paragraph. This emphasis leads to a wrong approach to the problem. It must be remembered that the Constituent Assembly has been functioning on the basis of an agreement with HMG and in accordance with their plan of May 16, 1946. That is the basic theme. In view, however, of certain developments, it is proposed to make certain changes which are enumerated later on. Those changes apply ultimately only to the areas deliberately choosing to opt out of the purview of the Constituent Assembly. I suggest therefore, that the wording I had recommended in my note yesterday for paragraph 4 should be kept. The present wording is not even in conformity with the original draft.

Paragraph 7. I fear that there is still lack of clarity. But I do not press this point any more as I have no objection to the intention behind this paragraph.

Paragraph 9. In this a reference is made to the demarcation of boundaries of the two parts of the Punjab on the basis of Givdavar circles. I do not know what these circles are. But I am told that our Sikh friends do not approve of this provision.

Paragraph 13. I notice the change made. As there is a reference in this paragraph to 'contiguous Muslim majority areas' and district adjoining Sylhet, I do not see any logic how the same principle might not be borne in mind regarding that part of Sind which adjoins Kutch and Jodphur. This is the Thar Pakar area which is largely desert, but which contains one town Umarkot. The area is big enough in the map, but is very sparsely populated. I realize the difficulties you pointed out yesterday and I have no wish to press for any addition to the document in regard to this matter. But I hope that you will bear this in mind so that when final changes have to be made this matter should also be considered.

Paragraph 14. End relating to the Sikhs. This is an addition. I think it is desirable that special reference be made to the Sikhs. But whether this paragraph will please them I rather doubt. The last sentence is not wholly correct. It is, of course, impossible to keep any group together 100 per cent in a scheme of partition. But it must be possible to meet many of the Sikh demands by certain variation of the boundary line. As the paragraph stands, I think it will serve no useful purpose and had better be omitted.

All as us sympathize very greatly with the Sikhs and would like to help them as much as possible in their predicament. But I do not feel competent, in a matter affecting them intimately, to say anything on their behalf or to commit them.

Subject to the remarks I have above, I am prepared to agree to the draft announcement. My remarks do not relate to any basic provision in the announcement but rather to the wording of it. Naturally my general acceptance to this draft and the proposals contained therein can only be, at this stage, a personal acceptance. I shall place the matter before the Congress Working Committee when they meet, and urge them to accept these basic provisions.

May I, however, make it clear again, as I have done previously on several occasions, that this acceptance is bound up with the acceptance of others also. That is to say, if there is a settlement on this basis, we accept these proposals for the sake of the settlement. If there is no clear settlement then there is no point in our accepting these proposals and in that event we revert to the Cabinet Mission's Plan of May 16, 1946.

That plan is, in fact, a kind of an agreement between HMG and all others in India except the Muslim League. We would have liked that Plan to remain in its entirety. But with a view to a complete settlement of claims and to the establishment of peaceful conditions, we are prepared to agree to a variation of the Plan as suggested in the draft announcement. A real settlement and an abandonment of further claims is an essential part of the scheme. Without this the proposals fall.

Proposals for Transfer of Power during the Interim Period.

It is essential that there should be a transfer of power by convention or agreement simultaneously with these proposals. The present position is an intolerable one when there is no real responsibility anywhere and the situation deteriorates rapidly. If the proposals in the draft announcement are agreed to then no further apprehension should remain in the minds of the Muslim League about any abuse of power or authority against them. In order, however to remove any lingering apprehension it may be said that the Governor-General will retain this over-riding power to safeguard the legitimate interests of minorities.

While we shall welcome any Parliamentary legislation for the interim period, this is really a matter for HMG to consider as how best to give effect to the transfer of power. What we are more interested in is the immediate transfer by convention so that the present situation might be dealt with adequately and adjustments made immediately to fit in with the future.

In the draft proposals for the transfer of power it should be remembered, first of all, that these are for the interim period only and do not in any way, take away from the announcement of February 20, 1947. The future set up will necessarily be determined by the authorities functioning in India or by the Constituent Assembly. The principal thing we are aiming at now is not only to create suitable conditions in India which will fit in with the interim period, but also to create a psychological atmosphere of friendship between India and England which will enable us to decide in a co-operative manner about our future relations.

Reference is made in these proposals to the transfer of power being on the basis of the Government of India Act 1935. It is inevitable that we should proceed on the basis of the existing structure subject to changes necessitated by the transfer of power. But the Government of India Act is a very complicated structure and some provisions of it may later come in our way. It is to be clearly understood that power to change this Act during this interim period will vest with the authority in India. Naturally we will not desire to make changes for a brief period but the power should be there in case of need.

I do not know what Parliamentary legislation might be passed by HMG. Without knowing its provisions fully it is obvious that we cannot commit ourselves to it as none of us are parties to it.

I accept generally the draft proposals for the transfer of power subject to the clarification given above. In paragraph 5 I should like to add at the end 'or till other arrangements are made'. This is merely to guard against the prolongation of the period contemplated in the paragraph.

We agree to the proposal that during this interim period the Governor-General should be common to both the States, if there are to be two States. For our part we shall be happy if you could continue in this office and help us with your advice and experience.

There is one important matter which so far has not been discussed, but which cannot be ignored. There should be some clause in our agreement to the effect that neither the Union nor the parts of India outside the Union forming a separate state shall be entitled to permit bases, extra territorial rights, or other infringements of the sovereignty of their territories by any outside state or power. Some such agreement must be made between two States in India for their mutual protection.

We have discussed various schemes and proposals which involve a partition of India. With great regret and in considerable agony of spirit we have agreed to these proposals because we earnestly desire a peaceful settlement of our problems and the least compulsion on any group or area. As you know we have stood for a united India and we have worked for it for the greater part of our lives. The partition proposed is not of our seeking. Our part in this proposed partition is only this that if there is to be a partition according to the will of the people, there should also logically be a partition of certain provinces. We have further agreed to certain territorial adjustments because HMG has apparently decided to hand over power only to a divided India. Because of our anxiety to have power handed over and because of our belief that the present situation urgently demands this, we are prepared to agree to the proposals made on behalf of HMG. But we would greatly prefer to stand for a united India as well as to continue to abide fully by the Cabinet Statement of May 16th. If there is no real settlement on the basis of the proposals now made and no handing over of power in accordance with them, then inevitably we stand for a united India and the Cabinet Statement of May 16th.

May I say how grateful I am for all the trouble you have taken in this matter. It is largely because of your personality and our faith in your sincere goodwill for India, that we have proceeded so far. I earnestly trust that we shall see some (?) light soon and put an end to the horrors that are disfiguring India.

I have consulted Sardar Patel and this letter generally represents his views also.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

¹ See *TOP*, Vol. X, Doc. 465, p. 858.

13. Interim Government to Continue as Before

Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to V.K. Krishna Menon, 17 May 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 165–8.

My dear Krishna,

...2. We had another two hours with Mountbatten today. So far as the draft statement is concerned, various changes were incorporated which I had suggested. In regard to one or two other matters, he said that he would put them up before HMG. He has still to face a tussle with Jinnah this evening and possibly he might see us again after dinner tonight. I do not know what the final outcome will be.

3. Regarding the proposals for the transfer of power, I found an entirely new draft different in many ways from the one we saw this morning. It was a little briefer. The main point of difference was the entire exclusion of the last paragraph which dealt with the Interim Government being treated as a Dominion Government by convention subject to the Viceroy retaining his overriding power to safeguard the interests of minorities. It was obvious that this had been deleted at Jinnah's instance. We took strong exception to this and in fact had a somewhat heated argument. Mountbatten, almost for the first time, took up an entirely contrary view and said that he thought we were unreasonable in insisting on this even to the point of breaking when it was only a question of two or three months. Both Vallabhbhai Patel and I pointed out that this had been a vital matter ever since we came into the Interim Government. Indeed we had come in on this very basis and I would never have formed the Government except on that basis. Soon after the Muslim League Members came in, this issue became a vital one and had ultimately led to our threatening resignation or in the alternative the removal of the Muslim League Members. This again led to our being summoned to London early in December. Again in January this issue became critical and because we made it clear that we could not continue, other developments took place which led to HMG's statement of February 20th and the change in the Viceroyalty.

4. So this particular issue has dominated the situation during the past nine months and it must be solved. In the new context, when there might be partition within a few months and a transfer of power, it is still more absurd for the present set-up of the Interim Government to continue. We were not objecting to the individuals in it, but rather to their lack of cooperation with each other.

5. I even told Mountbatten that if this matter was not settled satisfactorily, it might be difficult for us to continue in Government. This business of giving in to Jinnah when everybody else thought otherwise was an intolerable imposition.

6. Mountbatten, to my surprise, opposed us completely and said that the world would consider us completely wrong in our insistence on this issue. It would mean that we wanted to crush the League during these coming two or three months and possibly to interfere with their particular areas to their disadvantage.

7. I pointed out that this was completely wrong as we did not wish to interfere with those areas and we were prepared to allow the Viceroy to safeguard the interests of those areas as well as of minorities in general during this period. All we wanted was a free hand for the rest of India.

8. So the argument went on and Mountbatten made some rather fantastic proposals about each Department of Government having some kind of under-study belonging to the other

group who could serve as a check on any wrong action. Another proposal was that there might be separate Ministers for the separated areas.

9. Ultimately we did not press for the inclusion of a specific paragraph about the Interim Government functioning by convention as a Dominion Government because he said that would mean a complete break at this stage. But we told him that this matter must be explicitly and firmly put to HMG because we did not want any misapprehension about it. There was likely to be trouble later if it was not settled now. Mountbatten said he would do so and further that so far as he was concerned he would see to it that we functioned more or less as a Dominion Government. By that presumably he meant that he would not interfere himself. But that was not the point at all. Anyhow he said he would think about it and he asked the wise man V.P. Menon to cogitate also.

10. This afternoon, before I saw Mountbatten, I sent him a letter more or less covering the various points that had arisen.¹ I enclose the copy of that letter.

11. V.P. Menon is coming to see me tonight to tell me of the latest developments in regard to the Quaid-i-Azam. There is a possibility of our being sent for by the Viceroy also tonight. ...

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

¹ See Document No. 14.

14. Jinnah Comments on the Draft Announcement

Viceroy's Conference Paper No. 49, 17 May 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 208, NMML.

I have examined the copy of the 'Draft Announcement' furnished to me by you a couple of days ago. As you are pressed for time and you wanted me to give you my suggestion, I have, under high pressure, complied with your wishes, specially, as I was given to understand, that you are leaving on Sunday morning.

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1) With regard to paragraph 1, I wish to state that the Muslim League has finally and definitely decided that they cannot accept the Cabinet Mission's Plan of May 16, 1946.
- 2) Paragraph 2 is, as far as I can ascertain, substantially correct and, in view of what I have stated in paragraph 1, it is immaterial.
- 3) With regard to paragraph 3, so far as I know there is no agreement and His Majesty's Government through you as their representative are proceeding to transfer power in accordance with the White Paper of 20th February, 1947. As regard the statement 'nor is there anything in this Plan to preclude negotiations between communities for an united India', the Muslim League has already decided that India must be divided and Pakistan should be established.

II. THE ISSUES TO BE DECIDED

- 4) I cannot agree that the present existing Constituent Assembly should be allowed to continue. Because, in my opinion, it is *ab initio* invalid, but I agree that two

independent Constituent Assemblies should be established one for Pakistan and the other for Hindustan; and all power and authority should be transferred to the Pakistan and Hindustan Constituent Assemblies.

III. BENGAL AND THE PUNJAB

- 5). The Muslim League cannot agree to the partition of Bengal and the Punjab. It cannot be justified historically, economically, geographically, politically or morally. These provinces have built up their respective lives for nearly a century, administratively, economically and politically, and the only ground which is put forward for the partition is that the areas where the Hindus and Sikhs are in a majority should be separated from the rest of the provinces, on the ground that the Caste Hindus and Sikhs don't want to be under a government in which the Muslims will be in a majority.

The same can be urged by the Muslims and others that they don't want to be under a Government in which the Caste Hindus are in a majority and therefore other provinces should also be partitioned. It may be noted that there will be nearly 25 million of Mussalmans under the Hindu Government in Hindustan and millions of other communities such as the Scheduled Castes, the Christians, Adibasis and Tribes. The principle underlying the demand for establishing of Pakistan and Hindustan is totally different and I have already sent my Statement to you which I issued on the 30th of April, copy of which has also been sent to the Prime Minister. The Muslim League therefore cannot agree to the partition of Bengal and the Punjab and I do hope that His Majesty's Government, when they examine this demand will not accept it and that you and His Majesty's Government will both, in the name of justice and fairplay not submit yourselves to this clamour. For it will be sowing the seeds of future serious trouble and the results will be disastrous for the life of these two provinces and all the communities concerned.

In this connection I may draw your fullest consideration and earnestly press upon you that if you take this decision—which in my opinion will be a fateful one—Calcutta should not be torn away from the Eastern Bengal. It has been the heart of Bengal and the Province has developed and grown round this capital of Bengal which was for decades the capital of India before Delhi was established as capital. Merely because the majority of the Caste Hindu vocal section desires Bengal to be partitioned—for in Western Bengal there are 34 per cent Muslims, and out of the remaining 66 per cent the Scheduled Castes are 63 per cent and Caste Hindus 37 per cent, which is less than one third of the total population of the Western Bengal. I have every reason to believe that the Scheduled Castes are strongly opposed to the Partition of Bengal because they rightly say that they will be divided into two parts, one at the mercy of the Caste Hindus in Western Bengal and the other at the mercy of the Muslims in Eastern Bengal. They dread the Caste Hindus and it is well-known that they have suffered economical and social tyranny at the hands of the Hindus for which there is no parallel in the world. But if, unfortunately, partition is decided upon and Eastern Bengal is deprived of its only port of Calcutta which has developed its present position, in no case should it be allowed to go with the Western Bengal, otherwise it will follow as a corollary that Western Bengal will go into Hindustan and His Majesty's Government will be making the present of one great port to Hindustan. In any event, if worst comes to worst, Calcutta should be made a free port.

Paragraphs 6, 7 and 8

These paragraphs relate more to procedure on the assumption that the issue of partition is decided upon and that these two provinces of Bengal and the Punjab should be cut up into two. I cannot say that the procedure laid down is satisfactory. The one governing principle which has been accepted by you is that the real will of the people of the part that wants to separate should be ascertained and the inhabitants of that part must be given every facility to give their verdict freely and fairly and this can only be done in a satisfactory manner by a plebiscite or a referendum, no doubt on the basis of 1941 census. I may point out that having regard to the Communal Award, which was modified by the Poona Pact in tragic circumstances, the Scheduled Castes have been completely left at the mercy of the Caste Hindus in the Electorates. Besides, owing to the well-known fact that the Scheduled Caste are socially and economically so weak that even in the present electorates their number does not reflect the real strength of the population. Illiteracy and poverty are rampant amongst them and they are not qualified to come on the electoral rolls having regard to the present standard of franchise which is laid down. Therefore, great danger lies in a decision being taken on the question of separation of the Western Bengal from Eastern Bengal without any effective voice of the Scheduled Castes, being secured.

- 9) With regard to paragraph 9 and taking paragraph 5 along with it, Punjab and Bengal provinces will be divided according to administrative districts as laid down in the Appendix, and paragraph 9 says, 'for the purpose of deciding the issue of partition, Bengal and the Punjab provinces will be divided according to administrative districts as laid down in the appendix'. These appendices have not been furnished to me along with 'the Draft Announcement' and this is not a satisfactory position and will convey a totally wrong impression to the public. I, however, note that paragraph 9 proceeds on to say that 'for the purpose of a definitive partition of these provinces a more detailed investigation of boundary question will be needed as soon as the decision involving partition has been taken for either provinces a Boundary Commission will be set up, the membership and terms of reference of which will be settled in consultation with those concerned. Until the report of a Boundary Commission has been put into effect, the provisional boundaries indicated in the Appendix will be used'. I have already said that I have not got the appendix but if the object is to ascertain contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims, I would press upon you to lay down clearly that: the Boundary Commission will be instructed to demarcate the boundaries of the two parts of the Punjab on the basis of ascertaining contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims down to Girdwara circles, and that similar arrangement will be made in the case of Bengal.

V. NWFP

With regard to the paragraph 11, I cannot agree that there should be any consultation with the provincial Government. Besides there is no indication as to what will be the position of the provincial Government and the present Ministry in the NWFP, if the referendum results in the verdict that NWFP wants to join the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, because after the verdict in favour of Pakistan, the present Ministry cannot be allowed to carry on the administration of the Province.

VI. BRITISH BALUCHISTAN

- 12) I may point out that about 90 per cent of the population of British Baluchistan is Muslim and even the present elected member of the Constituent Assembly under the Cabinet Delegation scheme from British Baluchistan is a Muslim Leaguer and has not taken his seat in the existing Constituent Assembly.

If, however, a fresh representative were to be chosen then some truly representative, democratic machinery which will ensure free and fair expression of the view of the people, should be set up for the purpose.

VII. ASSAM

Assam is neither a Muslim province nor a Hindu province. The district of Sylhet and the areas adjoining the district and contiguous to Bengal are predominantly Muslim. In the event of partition of Bengal, Sylhet District and other Muslim majority areas of Assam contiguous to Bengal should be amalgamated to the Eastern Bengal. Here again we want to get a true verdict, free and fair, of the inhabitants of those areas. I am not in a position to say whether the procedure that you have laid down will secure the object and it requires further examination. I may also point out here that it is difficult for me to understand how the rest of the Assam province will in any case continue to participate in the existing Constituent Assembly, or a new Hindustan Constituent Assembly.

I would further like to add that in case Bengal is partitioned those areas of the Purnea district in Bihar which are contiguous to Eastern Bengal and have a Muslim majority should be amalgamated with Eastern Bengal.

- 15) It is not quite clear to me when it is stated that these representatives (which are stated in paragraph 14) 'will either join the existing Constituent Assembly or form a new Constituent Assembly according to the mandate given to them by the areas concerned'. For up to this state in your proposals there are only two Constituent Assemblies contemplated.

IX. TRANSFER OF POWER

- 16) With regard to paragraph 16, all power including Defence, Foreign Affairs, Finance and Communications and all other matters which are now dealt with by the Central Government or His Majesty's Government, should be transferred to the Constituent Assemblies of Pakistan and Hindustan.

XI. THE TRIBES OF THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER

- 18) It is not clear as to who will be the appropriate successor authorities to negotiate with the tribes of the NWFP of India. It must be made clear and in my opinion it can only be the Pakistan Constituent Assembly.



15. Acharya Narendra Deva Opposes Partition

Extract from a Press Interview Reported in *National Herald*, 19 May 1947

Hari Dev Sharma (Ed.), *Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Deva*, Vol. II, p. 176.

The Socialist leader declared: 'I stand for the unity of India and I am opposed to its partition. Even if any part of the country was separated we should treat this arrangement as temporary and should never relax our efforts for a reunion. A divided India would be a prey to foreign aggression and would not be able to get rid of British imperialism completely.

'When I speak of united India I also mean the absorption of all the Indian states within the Indian union. It is clear that so long as a single state remains outside the union or so long as the people of a single state do not achieve their freedom India cannot be said to be completely free. It is, therefore, obvious that even after June 1948, the objective of the Congress would not be achieved in full. Those who say that the struggle is over are wrong and have no correct appreciation of the task that lies ahead. I refer here only to the political aspect of our struggle. The economic struggle of the masses has yet to be fought and won.'

Acharya Narendra Deva referred to the demand for the partition of the Punjab and Bengal and said that it was made only because the League demanded Pakistan. If the demand for partition of India was justifiable, the other demand for partition of certain provinces became irresistible. All areas that were eager to remain in the Indian union had to be accorded the right to do so and those who believed in Indian unity could not but welcome such a move.

16. Questions about the Transfer of Power

Extract from a Letter from Doon Campbell to K.H. Khurshid, 20 May 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 806-7.

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4 PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI

Dear Mr Hasan,

Enclosed the set of questions I mentioned over the phone the other day. I would much like to have had the list in sooner but preoccupation with affairs in North India delayed their submission....

I do hope Mr Jinnah will feel disposed to answer some, if not all of, the questions.

Hoping to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,

A. DOON CAMPBELL

Enclosure

REUTERS LIMITED

4 PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI

19 May 1947

1. What sort of relationship do you envisage between Pakistan and Hindustan?
2. How would you divide the armed forces? Do you envisage a defence pact or any other kind of military alliance between Pakistan and Hindustan?

3. Do you favour a federation of Pakistan States even if there is to be partition of the Punjab and Bengal?
4. Will you demand a corridor through Hindustan connecting the Eastern and Western Pakistan States?
5. Do you envisage the formation of a Pan-Islamic State stretching from the Near and Middle East to the Far East after the establishment of Pakistan?
6. On what basis will the central administration of Pakistan be set up? What will be the attitude of this Government to the Indian States?
7. In general terms what will be the foreign policy of Pakistan? Will it apply for membership of the United Nations?
8. On which major power is Pakistan most likely to lean?
9. What sort of relationship do you envisage between Pakistan and Britain?
10. What are your views in regard to the protection of minorities in Pakistan territories?

17. Discussion in London on Issues Related to Transfer of Power

Extract from the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet India and Burma Committee in London, 20 May 1947

TOP, Vol. X, pp. 916–22.

...Minute 2

Proposals for the Transfer of Power on the Basis of Dominion Status

VISCOUNT MOUNTBATTEN emphasized that any announcement on this matter must make it clear that power would be transferred not later than the early autumn of 1947 instead of in June 1948; and that the Governor-General and any British officer who remained in India did so at the request of the Indians themselves. It would take about two months to withdraw British forces and this process should begin as soon as power was transferred. The only European members of the Defence Services to remain would be such army and naval officers as the Indians themselves required and as might volunteer to continue to serve, and any essential units that the British Government was prepared to let India have on loan.

The Viceroy said that, according to information which he had just received, it appeared that Mr Jinnah was still not prepared to commit himself in writing on the question of Dominion status for both parts of India. He had made it clear to a number of people that he wanted Dominion status for Pakistan, and that he wanted him (the Viceroy) to remain as Governor-General after June, 1948, so as to act as an arbitrator in the division of Central functions, etc. Pandit Nehru had agreed in writing (I.B. (47) 73) to a constitutional Governor-General acting as arbitrator in matters of common concern between the two independent States. It now seemed that Mr Jinnah was unwilling to pursue the subject at all until after the announcement had been made on 2nd June. The Viceroy thought that Mr Jinnah's objections to a common Governor-General for both States were:

- (i) that he would be resident in Delhi; and
- (ii) that, when he (the Viceroy) left, Congress would attempt to secure one of their own nominees for the post.

What Mr Jinnah really wanted was that Pakistan should have Dominion status and that Hindustan should leave the Commonwealth. The Viceroy thought that both parties should be

offered Dominion status before the end of 1947 and, if they did not agree to this, both should become independent. He wanted clear guidance from the Committee on this point, and their full support in taking this line if Mr Jinnah proved to be recalcitrant.

The Viceroy informed the Committee that the Governor of Bengal was apparently meeting with success in his efforts to secure that Bengal should remain united, and that it might therefore be possible to remove all reference to Bengal from the statement. If Bengal were to become independent, however, this would presumably involve the establishment of a third Dominion, with all the further complications which that would involve; several of the larger States might also wish to become separate Dominions....

Minute 3

Future of the Present Interim Government

VISCOUNT MOUNTBATTEN raised the question of the arrangements to be made for the conduct of the Interim Government during the period between the decision to partition India and the enactment of legislation in the United Kingdom providing for the transfer of power to two states on the basis of Dominion status. Both Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel had told him that, unless Congress could be given full control over the Hindustan area during this period, Congress Ministers would feel bound to resign from the Interim Government. There was no doubt that the Congress Ministers were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the working of the Interim Government. They believed that their agreement to the participation of the Muslim League in the Interim Government had been obtained on the understanding that the League would in return participate in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly; they were now convinced that the League's sole purpose in entering the Interim Government had been to prevent it from working effectively. The Interim Government had, perhaps, worked more successfully than Congress would admit, but there was little doubt that both parties had shown themselves primarily concerned to forward their own interests. The best arrangement would, of course, be for the Interim Government to continue while provisional governments were established for Hindustan and Pakistan and for its functions to be gradually transferred, either to the new Governments or to the suggested Functional Boards. There was no prospect, however, that the Congress leaders would agree to this procedure or could secure the support of their party for it. In these circumstances, there appeared to be two possible courses to follow—

- (a) Once the decision to partition had been taken, two Cabinets might be formed in Delhi with complete responsibility for Hindustan and Pakistan affairs respectively. These Cabinets would meet jointly under the Viceroy for consideration of central matters of common interest to both areas. This arrangement would, of course, involve the duplication of each of the existing Ministries.
- (b) The existing form of the Interim Government might be maintained, but each Minister would have a deputy, representative of the opposite party, who would understudy him.

The Viceroy said that he would wish to have the advice of Ministers whether interim arrangements on these lines could be adopted, and, if necessary, enforced, without need for amendment of the Government of India Act, 1935.

The Committee thought that arrangements of the kind at (a) above could be adopted by convention, but that such action would have to be validated in subsequent legislation.

The Committee:

Invited the Secretary of State for India to arrange for officials to prepare, in the light of the Committee's discussion and in consultation with the Reforms Commissioner of the Government of India, detailed proposals for interim arrangements for the administration of the Government of India during the period between the decision to partition and the enactment of United Kingdom legislation to provide for the transfer of power.

Minute 4

Mr Jinnah's Request for a Referendum in Bengal and the Punjab

VISCOUNT MOUNTBATTEN referred to the request made by Mr Jinnah in his note of 17th May (Annex A to I.B. (47) 73) that a referendum should be held in Bengal and the Punjab to determine whether or not these Provinces should be partitioned. The Viceroy had not felt able to accept this proposal which would, in his view, achieve no useful purpose and would merely result in delay. He had, however, promised Mr Jinnah that the matter would be submitted for consideration by Ministers.

The Committee:

Agreed that Mr Jinnah should be informed that his proposal for a referendum in Bengal and the Punjab was not acceptable to His Majesty's Government.

Minute 5

Request for Boundary Adjustments

VISCOUNT MOUNTBATTEN informed the Committee that three important proposals for boundary adjustments had been made by the Indian leaders. In his note of 17th May (Annex A to I.B. (47) 73) Mr Jinnah had proposed that, if Bengal was partitioned, those areas of the Purnea district in Bihar contiguous to Eastern Bengal should be amalgamated with it; Pandit Nehru had suggested that a small part of Sind should be transferred to Jodhpur State; and Sardar Patel had suggested that part of Kutch State should be transferred to the Bombay Presidency. Acceptance of these requests would open the door to innumerable demands of the same kind; they also raised the principle whether part of British India might be transferred to an Indian State.

The Committee thought that these were not matters on which decisions should be taken at this stage. Any boundary adjustments of this type should be a matter for settlement after the transfer of power, either by agreement between the parties concerned or under decisions by the appropriate Boundary Commissions.

18. Jinnah on the Revised Draft Announcement

Letter from M.A. Jinnah to Eric Mievill, 21 May 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 833–6.

Dear Sir Eric,

You sent to me a copy of the revised Draft Announcement in the form in which the Viceroy took it to London for consultations; and also you personally delivered to me in the afternoon of 20th of May at about 5.30 the full text of what purports to be Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's letter of 17th May and also his letter of 19th May, with regard to the two proposals for the transfer of power marked A and B.

I have given my full consideration to these and as arranged, I am sending herewith, within the time you had suggested, my note which please communicate to His Excellency Lord Mountbatten, who is now in the United Kingdom.

Please acknowledge receipt and oblige.

Yours sincerely,

M.A. JINNAH

Note by M.A. Jinnah on Jawaharlal Nehru's Letter on the Revised Draft Announcement

21 May 1947

Sir Eric Mievile personally handed over to me what purports to be the full text of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's letter dated 17th of May 1947, addressed to His Excellency Lord Mountbatten; and also what purports to be a copy of Pandit Nehru's letter of the 19th of May addressed to Captain Brockman.

I have carefully gone through them and I find that in the letter of 17th May the Congress acceptance is subject to more conditions and clarifications than it appeared from the extracts of his letter that were furnished to me and with which I had to deal in my note forwarded to Sir Eric Mievile on 19th of May....

The Muslim League will never agree to any change in the position, functions, or powers of the present Interim Government either by convention or otherwise, but that it must be dissolved as soon as two Constituent Assemblies are formed; and all power should be transferred to them immediately as it was originally laid down in paragraph 16 of the Draft Announcement.

I may add that His Excellency Lord Mountbatten's efforts will secure full justice to the 100 millions of Musalmans. I am not in the habit of flattering anyone, but I must say that throughout our discussions and examination of the various points, I was impressed by the high sense of integrity, fairplay and impartiality on his part and, therefore, I feel that Lord Mountbatten will succeed in his great mission.

And finally with reference to the revised Draft Announcement furnished to me on the 20th of May, I find, among others, that with regard to Bengal and the Punjab no change has been made in spite of my very strong objections to the partition of Bengal and the Punjab embodied in my note of 17th May. I can only reiterate all that I have said in that with regard to the partition of Bengal and the Punjab and I adhere to the views expressed therein.

M.A. JINNAH

19. Partition of India Implies Partition of Punjab

Telegram from Eric Mievile to Louis Mountbatten, 21 May 1947

IOR, R/3/1/150, Acc. No. 3465, NAI.

IMMEDIATE

NEW DELHI

SECRET

No. 1107-S. I have received this afternoon following letter from Baldev Singh.

Begins. I have seen the revised draft announcement enclosed with your letter of 20th May and regret to point out that the Sikh point of view has not been fully met even now. I would particularly draw your attention to the following 4 points:

- (1) It must be recognized that if India is to be divided, then the partition of the Punjab has to be effected to meet principally the demand of the Sikhs who, being one of the three major communities, are determined as a community not to be included in a Muslim dominated or Pakistan territory.
- (2) In order that the work of the Boundary Commission may not be prejudiced or obstructed 'the notional division' of the Punjab must include in addition to the 12 enumerated districts, the two districts of Gurdaspur and Lahore as well.
- (3) For the same reason, when interim zonal ministries are formed the territory of the Eastern Punjab must include in addition to the two Divisions of Ambala and Jullundur, the three districts of Lahore Division as well, namely, Gurdaspur, Amritsar and Lahore.
- (4) Para. 7. of the Draft Announcement is not clear. It seems to imply that on a demand from even a Single Member of the Punjab Legislature, who may be a Muslim, the entire Legislative Assembly will meet and decide—
 - (a) whether Punjab is to remain united, and
 - (b) which Constituent Assembly the Province would join as a whole.

Under this procedure as the wording of this para. stands, the Muslims who are in an absolute majority in the Legislature will force non-Muslims both to remain united and to join the proposed separate Constituent Assembly contemplated in para. 4(b) of the Announcement. This amounts to giving a veto to the Muslim majority in the Legislature. Para. 7 must therefore be redrafted and state clearly that this joint meeting of the Legislative Assembly as a whole can in no event prejudice the non-Muslim case for the partition of the Punjab whether India is divided or remains united and further that no vote in such a meeting shall compel the Eastern non-Muslim Punjab to form part of the separate Muslim dominated Constituent Assembly.

I would request you to communicate the above to HE in London immediately to clarify the ambiguity as in (4) above and in order that a complete picture is before His Majesty's Government when it is considering the final decision. *Ends.*

I have written to him and explained the position regarding para. 7 of the draft announcement.

20. Pakistan as Jinnah Saw It

Jinnah's Reply to Questionnaire from Doon Campbell, Reuter's Correspondent, 21 May 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 842–5.

Question 1: What sort of relationship do you envisage between Pakistan and Hindustan?

Answer: Friendly and reciprocal in the mutual interest of both. That is why I have been urging that let us separate in a friendly way and remain friends thereafter.

Question 2: How would you divide the armed forces? Do you envisage a defence pact or any other kind of military alliance between Pakistan and Hindustan?

Answer: All the armed forces must be divided completely, but I do envisage an alliance, pact or treaty between Pakistan and Hindustan, again in the mutual interest of both and against any aggressive outsider.

Question 3: Do you favour a federation of Pakistan States even if there is to be a partition of the Punjab and Bengal?

Answer: The new clamour for partition that is started by the vocal section of the Caste Hindus in Bengal and the Sikhs in particular in the Punjab will have disastrous results if these two provinces are partitioned and the Sikhs in the Punjab will be the greatest sufferers; and Muslims under contemplated Western Punjab will no doubt be hit, but it certainly will deal the greatest blow to those, particularly the Sikhs, for whose benefit this new hare has been started. Similarly in Western Bengal, Caste Hindus will suffer the most and so will the Caste Hindus in Eastern Punjab. This idea of partition is not only thoughtless and reckless, but if, unfortunately, His Majesty's Government favour it, in my opinion it will be a grave error and will prove dangerous immediately and far more so in the future. Immediately it will lead to bitterness and unfriendly attitude between Eastern Bengal and Western Bengal and same will be the case with torn Punjab, that is, between Western Punjab and Eastern Punjab.

Partition of the Punjab and Bengal, if effected, will, no doubt, weaken Pakistan to a certain extent. Weak Pakistan and a strong Hindustan will be a temptation for the strong Hindustan to try to dictate. I have always said that Pakistan must be viable and sufficiently strong as a balance *vis-à-vis* Hindustan. I am, therefore, deadly against the partition of Bengal and the Punjab and we shall fight every inch against it.

Question 4: Will you demand a corridor through Hindustan connecting the Eastern and Western Pakistan States?

Answer: Yes.

Question 5: Do you envisage the formation of a Pan-Islamic State stretching from the Near and Middle East to the Far East after the establishment of Pakistan?

Answer: The theory of Pan-Islamism has long ago exploded, but we shall certainly establish friendly relations and co-operate for the mutual good and world peace and we shall always stretch our hand of friendship to the Near and Middle East and the Far East after the establishment of Pakistan.

Question 6: On what basis will the Central Administration of Pakistan be set up? What will be the attitude of this Government to the Indian States?

Answer: The basis of the Central Administration of Pakistan and that of the units to be set up will be decided, no doubt, by the Pakistan Constituent Assembly. But the Government of Pakistan can only be a popular, representative and democratic form of Government. Its Parliament and Cabinet responsible to the Parliament will be both finally responsible to the electorate and the people in general without any distinction of caste, creed or sect, who will be the final deciding factor with regard to the policy and programme of the Government that may be adopted from time to time.

As regards our attitude towards the Indian States I may make it clear once more that the policy of the Muslim League has been and is not to interfere with the Indian States, with regard to their internal affairs. But while we expect as rapid a progress as possible in the various States towards the establishment of full responsible government, it is primarily the concern of the ruler and his people.

As regards the position of the States in the light of the announcement made by His Majesty's Government embodied in the White Paper of 20th February, I wish to make it clear that the States are at liberty to form a confederation as one solid group or confederate into more than

one group, or stand as individual States. It is a matter entirely for them to decide. It is clear, as far as I can understand, that Paramountcy is going to terminate and, therefore, they are completely independent and free. It is for them to adjust such matters as there may be by virtue of their treaties and agreements with the paramount power. They must consider as completely independent and free States, free from any paramountcy, as to what is best in their interest, and it will be open to them to decide whether they should join the Pakistan Constituent Assembly or the Hindustan Constituent Assembly, for there must be and will be two sovereign Constituent Assemblies of Pakistan and Hindustan.

Question 7: In general terms what will be the foreign policy of Pakistan? Will it apply for membership of the United Nations?

Answer: The foreign policy of Pakistan can only be for peace and friendly relations with all other nations and we shall certainly play our part in the membership of the United Nations.

Question 8: On which major power is Pakistan most likely to lean?

Answer: The one that will be in our best interests. It will not be a case of leaning on any power, but we shall certainly establish friendship and alliances which will be for the benefit of all those who may enter into such alliance.

Question 9: What sort of relationship do you envisage between Pakistan and Britain?

Answer: This question can only be decided by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan and, as I understand the situation, relationship between Pakistan and Britain can be established which will be really beneficial for both. Pakistan cannot live in isolation, nor can any other nation do so today. We shall have to choose our friends and I trust, wisely.

Question 10: What are your views in regard to the protection of minorities in Pakistan territories?

Answer: There is only one answer. The minorities must be protected and safeguarded. The minorities in Pakistan will be the citizens of Pakistan and enjoy all the rights, privileges and obligations of citizenship without any distinction of caste, creed or sect, and I have no doubt in my mind that they will be treated justly and fairly. The Government will run the administration and control the legislative measures by its parliament and the collective conscience of parliament itself will be a guarantee that the minorities need not have any apprehensions of any injustice being done to them.

Over and above that, there will be provisions for the protection and safeguard of the minorities which, in my opinion, must be embodied in the Constitution itself. And this will leave no doubt as to the fundamental rights of the citizens, protection of religion and faith of every section, freedom of thought, expression and association and protection of their cultural and social life.

M.A. JINNAH



21. Muslim League's Demand for a Corridor Not Genuine

Extract from a Letter from Govind Ballabh Pant to Vallabhbhai Patel, 22 May 1947
B.R. Nanda (Ed.), *Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant*, Vol. XI, pp. 145–6.

Naini Tal

My dear Sardar Sahib,

... I also hear that Mr Jinnah has issued a statement not only opposing the proposed partition of the Punjab and Bengal, but also demanding a corridor between Punjab and Bengal via UP and Bihar. If this is true then even the acceptance of the demand for division of the country will not bring us peace. The League seems to be spoiling for a fight. Whether that is their genuine wish and attitude or a mere pose it is difficult to say.

I hope you have been able to find a little rest at Mussoorie. You will have a particularly strenuous time of it on the return of the Viceroy.

It is just possible that I may see you even before the date fixed for the meeting of the Working Committee.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
G.B. Pant

22. Partition a Final Decision

Extract from Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet India and Burma Committee,
22 May 1947
TOP, Vol. X, pp. 954–5.

...The Committee then considered what policy should be followed in the event of either party refusing to accept the scheme for the transfer of power set out in the proposed announcement.

VISCOUNT MOUNTBATTEN said that, in that event, a decision would have to be made between four possible courses. Power might be handed over to the Interim Government: power might be transferred to the Provinces: the scheme contained in the announcement might be imposed as an Award: or the whole question might be referred to the United Nations. The Congress leaders would no doubt ask for the adoption of the first of these courses. They would argue that they had accepted the Cabinet Mission plan and that the arrangements proposed in the announcement were no more than a modification of it, under which the Provinces could opt out of the Union immediately instead of in ten years' time. The refusal of the Muslim League to accept the scheme would therefore be regarded by the Congress leaders as justification for strict adherence to the Cabinet Mission plan and for the immediate handing over of power to the Interim Government. But he did not think that Congress could be regarded as having accepted the Mission's plan, and, in fact, transfer of power to the Interim Government would be neither advisable nor practicable. In his view, the only possible course would be to carry through the scheme contained in the announcement, whatever attitude the Muslim League might adopt. The view of the Governor of the Punjab was that any attempt to impose partition of that Province would involve bloodshed, but no solution could now be found which would not result in some disorder. He did not, however, believe that Mr Jinnah would ultimately prove

completely recalcitrant, though it seemed doubtful whether he could be brought to agree to accept any plan as a final settlement. The greatest danger was that the Muslim League would adhere to their demands for full Pakistan as the inalienable right of Muslims, but at the same time acquiesce in and operate the plan. The Congress had undertaken to accept only if other parties accepted the plan as a final settlement. The adoption of such an attitude by the League might therefore lead to the withdrawal of Congress support for the plan.

The Committee shared the Viceroy's view that there could now be no question of attempting to carry out the Cabinet Mission's plan; the only course was to adhere to the plan contained in the proposed announcement, even if one of the parties should refuse to accept it. They thought that Mr Jinnah might be persuaded to adopt a more reasonable attitude if it could be indicated to him that the consequence of refusal would be a settlement less favourable, from his point of view, than that contained in the announcement. For instance, it could be pointed out to him that the proposals in their present form were very unfavourable to the Sikhs and that, if the Muslim League refused to accept the scheme, it would be necessary to arrange for the partition of the Punjab on a basis which would be substantially less favourable to the Muslims. He might also be reminded that, if the Muslim League boycotted the scheme, the only result would be that the Congress Party would have an effective start in building up a strong and well organized Hindustan. If, on the other hand, Congress threatened to withdraw their agreement, it could be pointed out to them that the decision was a final one on the part of His Majesty's Government, and they could be asked whether they themselves accepted partition as a final and permanent solution....

23. Need for Immediate Transfer of Power

Extracts from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Agatha Harrison, 22 May 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 336-9.

Mussoorie

My dear Agatha,

....For the present, however, we are in a sorry mess and the most ghastly reports reach us of what is happening in Lahore or Calcutta or elsewhere. There appears to be a general disintegration of the administration and nobody seems to be completely responsible for it. I am more sure than ever of the rightness of what Bapu said last year that the first thing to be done is an immediate transfer of power to some Indian authority. The British civil servants neither want to deal with the present situation effectively nor are they capable of it. They feel that they have to go anyhow pretty soon, so why should they bother. There is often also a secret satisfaction that India is going to pieces. India will not go to pieces whatever happens though there may be difficulties and troubles ahead. But we are going to have a bad time and this will continue till some strong and determined authority can deal with the situation. The present authority cannot and will not....

Yours sincerely
 Jawaharlal Nehru



24. Dominion Status for India

Record of Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Winston Churchill, 22 May 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 193, NMML.

After my meeting with Mr Churchill and the Opposition leaders (Mr Eden, Lord Salisbury and Sir John Anderson), I received a telephone message from Mr Churchill that the Opposition had agreed that they would facilitate legislation on the basis of this discussion. They now wished to discuss the matter further with me.

I therefore went round and saw Mr Churchill in bed. He handed me a copy of the letter that he had written to the Prime Minister, which is attached, and was extremely pleasant about what had been achieved in India in a short while. But he was extremely vitriolic about my predecessor.

He said that he hoped to get Indian matters dealt with on a bi-party basis. If I could achieve Dominion status for both Hindustan and Pakistan, the whole country would be behind us, and the Conservative Party would help to rush the legislation through.

He then asked me if I foresaw any difficulties, particularly with Mr Gandhi. I told him that Mr Gandhi was unpredictable, but that I doubted whether he would create any difficulties which could not be dealt with by Patel and Nehru.

He asked me whether I had received a letter from Nehru accepting Dominion status if power was transferred this year. I replied in the affirmative and added that I had given a copy to the Prime Minister. I pointed out that I had been unable to obtain a similar written assurance from Mr Jinnah. Mr Churchill expressed great surprise: 'By God', he said, 'he is the one man who cannot do without British help'. I pointed out that Mr Jinnah's methods of procedure could not be predicted by logic, and I told him that I must have a definite line of action to pursue in the event of his refusing to make up his mind about Dominion status. I told him that I proposed to inform Mr Jinnah that in that case we could go ahead with the transfer of power this year on a Dominion status basis for Hindustan with an option for Dominion status to be taken up at any time by Pakistan. He told me that the Conservative Party might not agree to the passing of legislation under those terms, and that he might, in fact, have to oppose this. I then asked him if he would advise me how I should proceed if Jinnah was intransigent.

He thought about this for a long time and finally said: 'To begin with you must threaten. Take away all British officers. Give them military units without British officers. Make it clear to them how impossible it would be to run Pakistan without British help'.

I agreed to try and follow some such policy, but said that we could not escape the fact that ultimately I must be authorized not only to threaten, but also to implement the threat of a transfer of power without Dominion status. I pointed out that if I could not do this, Jinnah might hold out indefinitely, and that we might then lose both Hindustan and Pakistan.

This shook Mr Churchill and he asked me to obtain the Prime Minister's approval to my seeing Mr Anthony Eden, Sir John Anderson, Mr Harold Macmillan and Lord Simon in the near future, and to discuss this very point.

I told him that Mr Godfrey Nicholson wanted to see me and he told me on no account to see him. He added that he was 'a very unsound Conservative with sentimental ideas about India', and he advised me to reply that if he wished to see me, then he should apply through the Prime Minister's Private Secretary.

Finally, he asked me to advise the Prime Minister to tell the other Dominions what was going on, so that they could get in touch with the prospective Indian Dominions and possibly help them to come in on a reasonable basis.

He authorized me to give Mr Jinnah the following message: 'This is a matter of life and death for Pakistan, if you do not accept this offer with both hands'.

Finally he suggested that if I were appointed Governor General of Hindustan and Governor General of Pakistan, I might adopt the title 'Moderator', which at one time had been suggested by the late President Roosevelt, instead of the title 'Viceroy'.

Enclosure

Mr Churchill to Mr Attlee

SECRET

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
21 May 1947

My dear Prime Minister,

I have now had an opportunity of consulting my colleagues upon the terms of a possible settlement in India which you and the Viceroy put before us last night.

As a result I am in a position to assure you that if those terms are made good, so that there is an effective acceptance of Dominion status for the several parts of a divided India, the Conservative Party will agree to facilitate the passage this Session of the legislation necessary to confer Dominion status upon such several parts of India.

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,
WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

25. Division of India Inevitable

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Ashrafuddin Ahmad Chowdhry, 23 May 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 170–1.

Mussoorie

My dear Mr Ashrafuddin Ahmad Chowdhry,

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of April 30th. I can hardly discuss the vital questions you refer to at length in a letter. I do not think we have given up any fundamental principle for which we stood. But it is true that the events that have taken place during the last nine months have made us think realistically of the problems before us. It is no good talking in terms of slogans when decisions have to be made.

The Congress has stood for the Union of India and still stands for it. But we have previously stated that we are not going to compel any part against its will. If that unfortunately leads to a division, then we accept it. But inevitably such a division must mean a division also of Bengal and Punjab. That is the only way to have a united India soon after. If we can have a united India straight away without such division, that will, of course, be very welcome.

I do not quite understand what you mean by saying that I should direct the members of our organization to face all eventualities in a courageous manner. Indeed I have tried to do so to

the best of my ability. I might inform you that I do not spend very much time with day-to-day files. I am much more concerned with the present and the future of the country.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

26. 'How Disaster in India Can Be Avoided'

Extracts from a Report from *The Statesman*, 23 May 1947.

Bombay, May 22.—Sir Homi Mody former member of the Viceroy's Executive Council said in an interview in Bombay today that the questions involved in the division of India were so many and so complex that the deadline of British departure would not see anything like their solution.

'It is of paramount importance therefore', he said 'that a machinery be jointly set up by Hindustan and Pakistan capable of functioning for a period of years, for dealing with the problems that will arise. The consequences might, otherwise, be disastrous'.

Sir Homi Mody was joint author with Dr John Matthai, now Transport Member of a memorandum on the economic aspects of Pakistan which they had submitted to the Sapru Committee of which they were members. The main conclusion of the memorandum was that Pakistan was feasible from financial point of view but that for any successful scheme of separation some system of effective and continuous co-operation in matters relating to defence and economic development was an 'indispensable pre-requisite'.

Only Way Out

Asked whether his conclusion of 1945 still stood valid he added: 'I have no desire to enter the lists on either side, but it seems to me an inescapable conclusion that a division of India would weaken both Hindustan and Pakistan and reduce the importance of this sub-continent in the eyes of the world. It may be that political peace is not to be obtained otherwise and from that standpoint, division is the only way out but it is essential that we have a clear appreciation of the price that will have to be paid for it'....

27. 'Corridor Demand Untenable: Rajen Babu'

The Tribune, 24 May 1947.

NEW DELHI, May 23.—Dr Rajendra Prasad, President of the Constituent Assembly, said here today that Mr Jinnah's demand for a corridor to link up the north-eastern and north-western Pakistan areas was untenable.

Answering the question whether he thought Mr Jinnah's demand was right and feasible, Dr Rajendra Prasad in an interview said: 'I do not think there is any case for a corridor. In any case, the rest of India can never agree to it—that means cutting through the Punjab, Delhi, the United Provinces, Bihar and part of Bengal, and a distance of nearly 1000 miles right through mainly non-Muslim areas. The United Provinces have only some 15 per cent of Muslim population and Bihar only 12.'

Dr Rajendra Prasad said he hated a division of the country, but emphasized that if there was to be a division then we have to insist upon a division of the provinces of Bengal and the Punjab.

Asked whether he thought a referendum would be necessary to decide upon the basis of partitioning these provinces, Dr Rajendra Prasad said 'I do not know if a referendum will be required because the views of the...which would like to be separated from Pakistan can be taken to be more or less unanimous. I have no doubt in my mind that there is no difference of opinion worth considering.'

If division became inevitable, he added, division of the armed forces would also become necessary.

28. Jinnah Rejects the Proposed Draft Announcement

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Eric Mieville, 25 May 1947

SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 175–8.

My dear Sir Eric,

Thank you for your letter of the 22nd May sending me copies of Mr Jinnah's two notes to the Viceroy dated 19th May and 21st May. I received these last evening at Mussoorie. I am on my way back to Delhi where I hope to reach tomorrow morning. I am anxious, however, to convey to you my reactions to Mr Jinnah's notes. I do not know what is happening in London except from the conflicting and unauthorized accounts appearing in the newspapers. It is clear, however, that Mr Jinnah's notes and the attitude he has taken up in them make a vital difference to the talks we have had so far with the Viceroy.

2. So far as we were concerned we gave our views on the draft announcement as well as in regard to the proposals for the transfer of power, without any reference to what Mr Jinnah had said on the subject. Indeed we did not know except rather vaguely and informally what his reactions had been. We had been told that he had more or less agreed to the fundamental basis of the various proposals.

3. In effect we had accepted the revised draft announcement as well as the other proposals. But we had made it clear that there was no point in our accepting them unless they were the basis of a settlement and no further claims would be put forward. If the Muslim League did not accept the very structure of those proposals, then there can be no settlement on that basis and the proposals fell through. We were not prepared to have a one-sided acceptance of them.

4. I was not aware that Mr Jinnah was only prepared to give anything in writing after he had seen what we had said on the subject. Mr Jinnah's note of the 19th May is chiefly an argument for being unable to say anything definite without seeing the full text of my letters addressed to the Viceroy. His note of the 22nd May is an argumentative criticism of various things said. I shall not go into any of these details as I think I have made our position quite clear in the course of my previous letters. It is clear, however, from what Mr Jinnah says that he does not accept the very basis of the proposals with regard to the partition of Bengal and the Punjab. In the course of a press interview he has gone much further and stated that he will resist any such partition. He has also added a demand for a corridor from the North-West to the North-East.

5. It is obvious that these demands and assertions are in complete negation of the basis of our talks with the Viceroy and the proposals and drafts that emerged there from. We are thus left exactly where we were when the talks started, or rather we have gone back because thus far there had been no authoritative mention of a corridor such as Mr Jinnah has now stated. In view of the attitude taken up by Mr Jinnah, we cannot give a one-sided agreement to any proposal

which does not lead to a full settlement. I have tried to make this perfectly clear in my previous letter and I wish to emphasize this again so that there might be no doubt in regard to it.

6. The consequence of Mr Jinnah's rejection of the main proposals in the draft announcement is that we must necessarily fall back upon the Cabinet Mission's Scheme of May 16, 1946. We have adhered to this and have been functioning in accordance with this in the Constituent Assembly and otherwise. It is quite clear that there can be no partition of any part of India unless this is done on a logical basis taking into consideration the views of the people concerned in particular areas. We all know the passionate objection in Western Bengal and Eastern Punjab to being excluded from the Union of India. The only alternatives, therefore, are: the inclusion of the whole of Bengal and the Punjab in the Union or the exclusion of Western Punjab and Eastern Bengal from the Union. Since the latter is objected to by Mr Jinnah, only the former course remains to be followed in accordance with the Cabinet Mission's Scheme.

7. Mr Jinnah's notes are confused and lack clarity, except for the fact that he seems to object to most things. In regard to one matter, however, that is our desire that the Interim Government should be immediately treated by convention as a Dominion Government subject to the Viceroy's overriding authority in regard to the protection of minority interests, Mr Jinnah has expressed strong disagreement. This has nothing to do with the draft announcement. But, as we have stated previously, it is a vital matter for us. The present position has given rise to an enormous amount of trouble. I do not see how it can possibly be carried on in future even for a brief period, more especially when other changes are envisaged. We attach the greatest importance to this and I really do not see why Mr Jinnah or the Muslim League should object to it when their particular interests are safeguarded and kept under the Viceroy.

8. Mr Jinnah also objects to my saying that HMG's announcement of 20th February 1947 should not be affected in any way by any other proposals or the implementation thereof. Surely it is nobody's contention that this announcement of HMG should be scrapped. What the future relationship of England and India should be, is a matter for our joint consideration later on. That will depend to a large extent on what happens during the next few months and the reaction in the public mind to it.

9. Mr Jinnah further says that he is unable to understand what is meant by my stating that any Act of the British Parliament conferring Dominion Status on India during the interim period may be varied by the authority in India. I thought that Dominion Status necessarily carried this right; otherwise it is not Dominion Status.

10. During the past few years it has been our repeated experience that Mr Jinnah does not commit himself to anything and does not like coming to a settlement. He accepts what he gets and goes on asking for more. We have arrived at a stage when this kind of thing will do good to nobody, and we are not prepared to have one-sided commitments in future. While these talks for a settlement are going on, the Muslim League has been carrying on aggressive 'Direct Action' movements involving violence of the worst type. Mr Jinnah, in spite of the appeal for peace made by him, has countenanced and encouraged these movements. This is not the way to a settlement and we are not prepared to agree to anything or to commit ourselves in any way unless this campaign of violence ceases and a settlement is arrived at.

11. I am anxious that there should be no misunderstanding about our attitude in the Viceroy's mind or in the mind of HMG. I would, therefore, request you to inform the Viceroy and HMG immediately of our strong feelings on this subject and our reaction to Mr Jinnah's notes.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

29. 'Jinnah Cannot Be Taken Seriously'

The Hindustan Times, 27 May 1947.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Home Minister in the Interim Government, characterizes Mr Jinnah's recent demand for a corridor as 'such fantastic nonsense as not to be taken seriously at all.'

Sardar Patel, in a telegraphic answer to a question put to him by the *United Press of America* as to whether a corridor is practicable and whether the Congress would agree to it, says: 'The idea of a 1,000-mile-long corridor through a hostile non-Muslim area on the face of it is such fantastic nonsense as not to be taken seriously at all. The demand itself discloses the sponsor's (Mr Jinnah's) lack of confidence in the Pakistan scheme.'

Answering another question about the possibility of a sovereign Pakistan making agreements with foreign Powers without reference to Hindustan, Sardar Patel says: 'The need for joint consultation on matters of defence and external relations has already been conceded by Mr Jinnah. It is, therefore, inconceivable that concessions of extra-territoriality or external arrangements will be made without consultations with Hindustan. Such action will be regarded as hostile.'

30. 'Britain Has No Right to Change Map of India'

The Hindustan Times, 27 May 1947.

Mahatma Gandhi urged every patriot and certainly the British Power to face out the worst violence and asked the British to leave India as it can be left under the Cabinet Mission's plan of May 16 of last year, addressing the prayer meeting at Bhangi Colony on Monday evening.

Gandhi expressed the hope that 'free India will not give the world an additional object lesson in violence with which it is already sick almost unto death.'

Gandhi added that it was not for the British Power to change the map of India. The British must withdraw on or before the promised date.

Recalling his remarks on Sunday that it was unbecoming on the part of Indians to look to London for what the British Cabinet thought of the future of the country, Gandhiji said: 'It is not for them to give us liberty. They can only get off our back. That they are under promise to do. But for keeping India and giving it shape, we have to look to ourselves.'

'I promised to tell you how we were to do it. In my opinion we are unable to think coherently whilst the British power is still functioning in India. Its function is not to change the map of India. All it has to do is to withdraw and leave India, if possible, carrying on in an orderly manner. British Power must withdraw on or before promised date, even if the country is left in chaos.'

No Vital Change Possible

'But there is an additional reason why no vital change in the shape of Hindustan is possible in the present state of the country. There is the joint statement issued by the Qaid-e-Azam and me. It enunciates a sound principle that there should be no violence employed in the pursuit of political aim.'

'If in the teeth of that document the country continues the mad career of violence of the worst kind and the British power is weak enough to submit to it in the vain hope that after the mad thirst is quenched, things will run smooth, it would have left a bloody legacy for which not

only India but the whole world will blame her. We will then have learnt the cruel lesson that everything was to be got if mad violence was perpetrated in sufficient measure.

‘I would therefore, urge every patriot and certainly the British power to face out the worst violence and leave India as it can be left under the Cabinet Mission document of May 16 of last year.’

British Presence Demoralizing

‘Today in the presence of the British power we are only demoralized by the orgy of blood, arson and worse. After it is withdrawn, let me hope we shall have the wisdom to think coherently and keep India one or split it into two parts or more. But if we are bent upon even then on fighting. I am sure we will not be so demoralized as we are today, though admittedly all ... carries with it some amount of demoralization. I shall hope against hope that free India will not give the world an additional object lesson in violence with which it is already sick almost unto death.’

Right to Pray

Earlier in his speech, Gandhiji repeated what he said on Sunday that public prayer was a precious privilege. It could not be lightly thrown away—it was a good thing to pray even though wrongly, whilst there was danger of the objector being molested. But by your exemplary and repeated response to my appeal you remained perfectly and deliberately passive. So when I saw that our restraint was being abused I adopted another course on Sunday. And I was glad that the objecting sister no longer persisted in the vocal objection whatever might have been the state of her mind. I trust that the same decorum would be continued. That is the least that laws of public prayers demand. I would ask you also, whenever such objection occurs again on the one hand to go on with your prayer and on the other to be wholly tolerant and kind to the objectors—Reuter.

31. “Inshallah We Shall Have Corridor”: Nishtar’s Address at League Meeting in Muzaffarnagar’

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 27 May 1947.

MUZAFFARNAGAR, Monday.—‘The North-Western and the Eastern Zones of Pakistan will be but two parts of the same Government and there must be, and we will have it “Inshallah”, a corridor to connect the two. The Frontiers of these parts of Pakistan cannot be decided by either the Hindus or the British, but they will be determined according to our needs and our wishes,’ declared Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, the Communications Member, while addressing a mammoth public meeting, held here on Sunday night, under the Presidentship of Hazrat Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, President of the All India Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam.

The meeting was organized by the Muzaffarnagar district and City Muslim League and the local Muslim Students’ Federation jointly.

Sardar Nishtar said: ‘We want a friendly settlement as between two brothers. There has been too much of bloodshed and many innocent lives have been lost. Such loss of human life does in no way help anybody in arriving at a settlement. We want peace but an honourable peace.’...

CONGRESS CLAMOUR

Referring to the clamour from the Congress Chiefs against the corridor demand so rightly put forward by Mr Jinnah, he said that it had ever been the policy of the Hindus to keep the Muslims divided among themselves. Now that the Muslims are getting a Sovereign State of their own, they want the two parts of that state to remain unconnected with each other.

'But remember,' added Nishtar, 'iron and magnet can never remain away from each other. The two zones of the Pakistan State will come close to each other, irrespective of whether the Hindus like it or not.'...

DISPUTED CHILD

Hazrat Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, in his address, referred to the *Hadith* regarding the Prophet Sulaiman ordering a disputed child to be divided into two and the two parts being handed over to the two claimant 'mothers' and the real mother offering to give up her claim to the child and said that this argument was used against the Muslims' demand for the partition of India, some time ago, by the Hindus. 'They should have then handed over the whole of India to the Muslims. But now they want the provinces of Bengal and Punjab also to be divided. Then let there be more divisions. Let every district, every village, every mohalla, and perhaps every street be divided. We have not yet been amputated but even if, despite our efforts to the contrary, we are amputated, we will see that we are soon up and doing, kicking and alive,' he continued. He cited the case of the tribal belt, where the Pathans, though poor, never bartered away their freedom for worldly gains. Freedom is their first consideration.

The Maulana made a stirring appeal to the nationalist Muslims to join the ranks of the Muslim League. He was prepared, even at this stage, for a joint conference of the Ulemas in which they could have their objections to Pakistan answered.

The Mussalman, added the Maulana, never cared for his life. As long as this disregard to life remains, he is living; but he should not invite trouble through his weakness. He can sacrifice his life, but he should not allow himself to be murdered in cold blood.

He quoted again from the Holy *Hadith* that some Muslims who had come to the Holy Prophet in a very poor famished condition had not sold away their swords to procure food for them, although they had been hungry for many days. The enemy was getting himself ready for wiping the Muslims, who should be ready for their defence and they can do it only by joining the Muslim National Guards....

32. 'Vivisection of India Impracticable'

Extract from a Report from *The Hindustan Times*, 27 May 1947.

Dehradun, May 26.—'India is awake and full of life today, and that is why although the country has not attained independence it has begun to rank among the greatest countries of the world,' said Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, addressing a crowded gathering of Congress workers last evening.

The credit for this was due to Mahatma Gandhi, said Pandit Nehru, because he was not only a great political leader but one who had infused courage into the people and made them bold.

Referring to the Pakistan demand he said that the Congress opposed it on principle and stood for a united India. It now demanded division of Bengal and the Punjab also on the same principle. 'Those who are clamouring for partition will themselves see how impracticable and economically unsound that is', declared Pandit Nehru.

He added: 'Many problems, some intricate, though essential, such as controls, and some very distressing such as the communal situation, are facing us, but bigger ones, such as national independence and bearing responsibility for the future governance of the country, must have priority.

'Circumstances which induced us to form the Interim Government have entirely changed now and had later developments been foreseen by us, we would have perhaps refused to accept the offer. Old slogans which helped us to drive the Britishers away from India have grown useless and out of date. Our fight is not yet over.

'But we should strengthen the Congress with renewed enthusiasm and direct national dynamism, still intact, to right channels. The division of the Punjab and Bengal has brought realism to League politics but what is in store for us in future no one can say...'

33. Congress Deliberations on HMG's Statement

Extracts from the Proceedings of the Congress Working Committee, 31 May 1947–5 June 1947

AICC Papers, File No. G-43/1947, NMML.

A meeting of the Working Committee of the Congress held at Bhangi Colony, Delhi on 31st of May 1947 at 3 p.m.

Mahatma Gandhi was present at the meeting. The following members and invitees were also present:

1. Acharya Kripalani,
2. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan,
3. Mrs Sarojini Naidu,
4. Dr Prafulla Chandra Ghose,
5. Mrs Kamaladevi Chatopadhyaya,
6. Mr R.A. Kidwai,
7. Sardar Patel,
8. Moulana Azad,
9. Pt Jawaharlal Nehru,
10. Dr Rajendra Prasad,
11. Syt Shankarrao Deo,
12. Acharya Jugal Kishore,
13. Sardar Pratap Singh,
14. Syt Rajagopalachari,
15. Raosaheb Patwardhan,
16. Syt Jai Prakash Narain,
17. Jairam Das Doulatram,
18. Dr Khan Saheb,
19. Sardar Baldeo Singh,
20. Syt Jagjivan Ram,
21. Dr Pattabhi Sitarammayya,
22. Dr Mathai,
23. Syt Bhabha,
24. Surendra Mohan Ghose.

Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru gave a brief account of the political negotiations with the Viceroy since the last meeting of the Working Committee. Panditji also stated that some correspondence had passed between him and the Viceroy, the gist of which he said he would give in a note the next day.

On the question being raised as to why the President of the Congress was not invited to the proposed conference with the Viceroy on June 2nd while the President of the League was, Panditji said that he had raised that question with the Viceroy and was informed that the latter had intended to invite him separately. The Committee however felt that as it was evident that the Viceroy was going to meet the representatives of the main political parties at a Joint Conference, it was desirable and proper that the Congress President should also be there. Panditji stated that he would again draw the attention of the Viceroy to this omission, and convey to him the feelings of the Working Committee.

The meeting thereafter adjourned to meet on the 1st June at 3-30 p.m.

The adjourned meeting of the Working Committee was held at the Bhangi Colony on 1st June at 3-30 p.m.

Mahatmaji, all the members of the Working Committee and other invitees were present.

Pt Jawahar Lal Nehru read out the note containing the gist of his talks and correspondence with the Viceroy. There was a general discussion on the points stated in this note. Syt Jai Prakash Narain raised the question whether the Working Committee was justified in committing it self in its letter to the Viceroy dated the 1st of May to the principle of partition of India without any previous reference to and sanction of the AICC.

The President and Sardar Patel pointed out the difficulty of consulting the AICC at every stage specially negotiations like the present were going on between the Working Committee and the Viceroy. They said that the stand which the Working Committee had taken flowed out of the resolution of the AICC passed at its various meetings since 1942 August. The Working Committee, they said, would however face the AICC and explain to it the circumstances under which the Working Committee had to take the present decisions.

The Committee adjourned to meet on the 2nd June at 3 p.m.

The meeting of the Working Committee was held in Bhangi Colony at 3 p.m. on the 2nd.

Mahatmaji, members of the Working Committee and other invitees were present.

Pt Jawahar Lal Nehru gave a brief account of the proceedings of the conference with the Viceroy this morning. HMG's statement, which was handed over to the Presidents for consideration by their respective Working Committees, was placed before the Committee. As the Viceroy wanted a reply before 12 midnight, the Committee authorized Pt Jawahar Lal Nehru in consultation with Acharya Kripalani, Sardar Patel and Pt Govind Ballabh Pant to draft a reply on the basis of discussions which took place in the committee, and to place the reply before the Working Committee at 8 p.m. for its approval.

The draft of the letter prepared by Pt Jawahar Lal Nehru and others was read.

Mahatmaji gave his reactions to the statement of HMG and to the draft letter. He said that though he did not agree with the decisions of the Working Committee regarding the division of India, he did not want to take any step which would stand in the way of the Working Committee in implementing its previous decision. He however pointed out that there was still some scope for further clarification, and he suggested that Clause 20 relating to the right of the parts to decide to remain or not within the British Commonwealth should be clarified and the Govt should be

informed that the Congress does not want that any deferential treatment should be meted out to any seceding part of India. He also wanted that a written and categorical assurance should be forth-coming from the Muslim League that it accepts the statement as a final settlement and will not make any further claims beyond what is conceded in this statement.

After a general discussion the draft letter was approved, but it was referred to the Committee to redraft it in the light of the suggestions made by Mahatmaji.

The meeting of the Working Committee then adjourned to 3rd June at 3 p.m.

The adjourned meeting of the Working Committee was held at 3 p.m. at the Bhangi Colony.

- I. The President gave a short account of the proceedings of the Conference held by the Viceroy in the morning.
- II. The Committee decided to call an urgent meeting of the AICC in Delhi on the 14th and 15th June to consider HMG's latest statement of June 3rd.
- III. At the suggestion of the President, the Working Committee decided that in view of the developing political situation the consideration of the draft constitution of the Congress by the AICC should be postponed, and that the AICC office should adopt such of the rules proposed in the interim report of the draft Committee as would be necessary to maintain a stricter discipline in the Congress and to root out corrupt practices....

34. Tribal Jirgas in Baluchistan Should Be Consulted

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten, 31 May 1947

IOR, R/3/1/155, Acc. No. 3469, NAI.

17 York Road, New Delhi

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Mr Abell has written to me asking me to send proposals for obtaining a representative for Baluchistan. I have no particular proposal to put forward at this stage. I was under the impression that the first thing to be done was to ascertain the wishes of the people of Baluchistan regarding the position of that Province in the future set-up of India. This too becomes necessary in the event of certain changes taking place in regard to the Punjab and Bengal.

2. You suggested to me in Simla, I think, that possibly a way of ascertaining the wishes of the inhabitants would be to send a Commission to meet the full Jirgas of the various Tribes and to report on their reactions to the proposals made. I am inclined to think that some such procedure might be feasible and desirable. A Commission might be appointed consisting of suitably chosen senior judicial officers and possibly representatives of the External Affairs Department. This Commission should arrange for full meetings of the Jirgas and attend them explaining the points at issue. They may or may not take votes. They should really find out the general sense of each meeting and report accordingly. If necessary the Commission should split up into smaller sections to meet some of the Jirgas.

3. The point is that they should consult as large a number of people as possible and not confine themselves to the selected few of the Shahi Jirga.

4. As regards the people of Quetta Municipality, it should be possible to take a referendum of them or at any rate of the voters in the Municipality.

5. The Commission should submit a consolidated report giving their views of what the people of Baluchistan desire in the matter. They should also suggest the best means of representation in the Constituent Assembly.

6. I discussed this matter today with Sir Geoffrey Prior, the AGG in Baluchistan, and he seemed to think that the method of appointing a Commission to ascertain views would be feasible.

Yours sincerely,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

35. Independence at the Cost of Unity Will Be Dark

M.K. Gandhi's Conversation with Manu Gandhi, 1 June 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVIII, pp. 50–2.

The purity of my *yajna* will be put to the test only now. Today I find myself all alone. [Even the Sardar and Jawaharlal] think that my reading of the situation is wrong and peace is sure to return if partition is agreed upon. The Viceroy is a nice and intelligent man. They did not like my telling the Viceroy that even if there was to be partition, it should not be through British intervention or under the British rule. They wonder if I have not deteriorated with age. But if I did not show myself as I am, I would prove a hypocrite. And I must speak as I feel, if I am to prove a true and loyal friend to the Congress. Never mind if I am not a four anna member of the Congress. But they all come and consult me, seek my advice. Similarly I am also a friend of the British. I must therefore tell the British what is good for them. Else, of what use is my being their friend? If I were to prove my true and loyal friendship to them it becomes my bounden duty to lay bare the facts before them and show them the right way, regardless of whether my advice is appreciated or resented. I see clearly that we are setting about this business the wrong way. We may not feel the full effect immediately, but I can see clearly that the future of independence gained at this price is going to be dark. I pray that God may not keep me alive to witness it. And I have left you in this vast field to fend for yourself. I have done it with full deliberation because you share my burden in this sacrifice although you are a little girl with no experience of life. In order that God may give me the strength and wisdom to remain firm in the midst of universal opposition and to utter the full truth, I need all the strength of purity that you will have in your sincere work, whether in thought or act, while waking or asleep or even when you are not conscious of yourself. In the matter of devotion or purity, or in treading the path of truth years hardly count; what is needed is spiritual strength. Wasn't Prahlad very young? Had little Dhruva attained a mature age? But they had the strength to tread the path of truth. Moreover, a man may grow old and yet be a fraud. But somehow in spite of my being all alone, in my thoughts, I am experiencing an ineffable inner joy and freshness of mind. I feel as if God himself was lighting my path before me. And it is perhaps the reason why I am able to fight on single-handed. People now ask me to retire to Kashi or go to the Himalayas. I laugh and tell them that the Himalayas of my penance are where there is misery to be alleviated, oppression to be relieved. There can be no rest for me so long as there is a single person in India whether man or woman, young or old, lacking the necessities of life, by which I mean a sense of security, a life style worthy of human beings, that is, clothing, education, food and shelter of a decent standard. I said the same thing to Sarat Babu yesterday. I cannot bear to see Badshah Khan's grief. His inner agony wrings my heart, but if I gave

way to tears, it would be cowardly and, stalwart Pathan as he is, he would break down. And I don't want him to break down. But maybe all of them are right and I alone am floundering in darkness. The more you remain vigilant and cheerful by maintaining good health the more you will influence all that I do.

I shall perhaps not be alive to witness it, but should the evil I apprehend overtake India and her independence be imperilled, let posterity know what agony this old man went through thinking of it. Let not the coming generation curse Gandhi for being a party to India's vivisection. But everybody is today impatient for independence. Therefore there is no alternative. This is like eating wooden *laddoos*, if they eat it they die of colic; if they don't they starve.

36. Congress Accepts Division

A Letter¹ from M.K. Gandhi, on or after 2 June 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVIII, p. 63.

Probably no one is more distressed than I am over the impending division of India. But I have no desire to launch a struggle against what promises to be an accomplished fact. I have considered such a division to be wrong and therefore I could never be party to it. But when the Congress accepts such a division, even though reluctantly, I would not carry on any agitation against that institution. Such a step is not inconceivable under all circumstances. The Congress association with the proposed division is no circumstance warranting a struggle against it of the kind you have in mind. Nor can I endorse your attack upon the British. They have not in any way promoted or encouraged this step.

¹ The addressee, in his letter, had said: 'The British are quitting India but leaving it divided... In case you launch a struggle against the division of India on communal or Indian States basis ... I respectfully offer about one lakh ... disciplined volunteers loyally to carry out your orders.'

37. Reactions to HMG's Proposals

Letter from J.B. Kripalani to Louis Mountbatten, 2 June 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 157, NMML.

6 Jantarmantra Road
New Delhi

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

The Congress Working Committee have considered the statement which HMG propose to make tomorrow and a copy of which you were good enough to give me this morning.

2. The proposals contained in this statement are of far reaching importance and affect the whole future of India. These envisage the possibility of certain parts of India seceding from the rest.

3. As you know, the Congress has consistently upheld that the unity of India should be maintained. Ever since its inception, the Congress has worked towards the realization of a free and united India. Any proposal, therefore, which might bring about separation of a part of India from the rest is painful to contemplate and, in the opinion of the Congress, is harmful to all the parties concerned. Such a proposal would normally have to be considered by the All-India Congress Committee. The Working Committee would make its recommendations

to that Committee, but the final decision would rest with the All-India Congress Committee, or the full session of the Congress itself.

4. We have realized, however, that in the peculiar and abnormal situation of today it is not possible to delay matters and decisions have to be reached rapidly. There has been far too much uncertainty in the country and this has led to instability and to violence on a large scale. We have also appreciated that the negotiations that have been going on for some time between you and Indian leaders had of necessity to be secret.

5. My Committee considered the principles underlying the present proposals about a month ago and generally accepted them. This acceptance was conveyed to you in paragraph 12 of the letter dated 1st May 1947 which Shri Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to you.

6. As we have stated on many occasions, we accepted in its entirety the Cabinet Mission's Statement of 16th May 1946 as well as the subsequent interpretation thereof dated 6th December 1946. We have indeed been acting in accordance with it and the Constituent Assembly which was formed in terms of the Cabinet Mission's Plan has been functioning for nearly six months. We are still prepared to adhere to that Plan. In view, however, of subsequent events and the situation today, we are willing to accept as a variation of that Plan the proposals now being made.

7. I do not wish to enter into any detailed examination of the proposed statement of HMG. It has been produced after considerable consultation and I am desired to say by my Committee that we are prepared to accept it and to recommend to the All-India Congress Committee to do likewise. We do so in the earnest hope that this will mean a settlement. We feel that the situation in India, political and economic, as well as communal, demands more than ever a peaceful approach to all our problems. These problems cannot be solved by methods of violence, and there can be submission to such methods.

8. While we are willing to accept the proposals made by HMG, my Committee desire to emphasize that they are doing so in order to achieve a final settlement. This is dependent on the acceptance of the proposals by the Muslim League and a clear understanding that no further claims will be put forward. There has been enough misunderstanding in the past and in order to avoid this in the future it is necessary to have explicit statements in writing in regard to these proposals.

9. We believe as fully as ever in a united India. The unity we aim at is not that of compulsion but of friendship and cooperation. We earnestly trust that when present passions have subsided our problems will be viewed in their proper perspective and a willing union of all parts of India will result there from.

10. There are some matters, however, to which I should like to draw your attention. My Committee realize that the proposals being put forward may result in injury to the Sikhs unless great care is taken and their peculiar position in the Punjab is fully appreciated. We are aware that HMG and you are anxious to protect all legitimate Sikh interests. The matter will have to be considered by the Boundary Commission provided for and we earnestly trust that all other factors, apart from population, will be taken fully into consideration. The Sikhs have played a vital role in developing a considerable part of the Punjab. They have been pioneers in the canal areas and have converted by their labours the desert into the richest part of the Punjab. It has been made clear in the document that the notional partition is of a purely temporary character and the final boundaries will be determined by the Boundary Commission.

11. In the last sentence of paragraph 9 it is stated that 'until the report of the Boundary Commission has been put into effect, the provisional boundary as indicated in the appendix

will be used'. It is not quite clear to what this refers and what the use will be. It is well-known that the notional division ignores other important factors and that the Sikhs are distressed by it. If any further use is made of this notional division for administrative or other purposes, this will inevitably affect the final division and will give rise to a great deal of apprehension in the minds of the Sikhs. We would, therefore, urge you not to apply that notional division for any administrative purpose during the interim period. This would be in keeping with the spirit of the document and with what you conveyed to us this morning.

12. In paragraph 11 of the Statement reference is made to a referendum in the NWF Province. There has been a growing demand in the Province for independence and subsequent decision as to their relation with the rest of India. The referendum should also provide for this.

13. In paragraph 20 of the Statement, which we are told is an addition to the original draft, the last sentence refers to the right of the Constituent Assemblies to decide in due course whether or not India or any part of it, will remain within the British Commonwealth. It seems to us extremely undesirable and likely to lead to friction if the relations of Britain with the Indian Union and the seceding parts of it are on a differential basis. We should, therefore, like to make it clear that we cannot be consenting parties to any such development.

14. In view of the importance of the proposals and decision being made, my Committee intend to convene a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at an early date. They propose to recommend the acceptance generally of the Statement of HMG as a settlement of our political and communal problems.

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani

38. Gandhi's Reactions to His Majesty's Statement

M.K. Gandhi's Speech at the Meeting of the Congress Working Committee at New Delhi, 2 June 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVIII, p. 61.

Mahatmaji gave his reactions to the statement of His Majesty's Government and to the draft letter. He said that though he did not agree with the decisions of the Working Committee regarding the division of India, he did not want to take any step which would stand in the way of the Working Committee in implementing its previous decision. He however pointed out that there was still some scope for further clarification, and he suggested that Clause 20 relating to the right of the parts to decide to remain or not within the British Commonwealth should be clarified and the Government should be informed that the Congress does not want that any differential treatment should be meted out to any seceding part of India. He also wanted that a written and categorical assurance should be forthcoming from the Muslim League that it accepts the statement as a final settlement and will not make any further claims beyond what is conceded in this statement.



39. Sikh Sentiments Should Be Considered

Letter from Baldev Singh to Louis Mountbatten, 2 June 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 157, NMML.

1 Bhagwan Das Road
New Delhi

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

I have discussed with Sikh leaders the Statement which HMG propose to make tomorrow, a copy of which you were good enough to give me at this morning's Conference.

The proposals in the Statement are of far-reaching character, envisaging the possibility of a division of India into two sovereign States in both of which the Sikhs will have vital stakes. As you know, we as a community have always stood for a United India and all we have desired is that our particular interests should be adequately safeguarded. The plan now made implies that a substantial area, where a sovereign State based ostensibly on Islamic principles is likely to be established as conceived by the spokesman of the Muslim League. The Sikhs have been unable to obtain any coherent and acceptable guarantee of their security in such a set-up and are therefore unable to contemplate being forced into it against their will. I have made this clear to you. Recent happenings in the Western Punjab have further proved that we can expect no security whatever under Muslim domination.

You will therefore appreciate the anxiety of my community and their demand that in the event of the division of India as contemplated, the plan must be so devised as to ensure that Sikhs as a community are not subjected to irreparable injury.

I must say that judged by this simple test the plan as it stands is far from satisfactory. My Sikh friends and I, however, do appreciate that the principle of the partition of the Punjab has been accepted and the anxiety you have expressed to help the community. There are certain matters in this connection which I consider it my duty to bring to your notice. These are:

- (i) In para 9, the last sentence of which reads: 'Until the report of a Boundary Commission has been put into effect, the provisional boundaries indicated in the appendix will be used' it is not clear what this refers to and in what respects this boundary is to be used. In this connection you will remember that in my previous letters, I have insisted that nothing should be done to prejudice our case before the Boundary Commission. My fear was that the proposed notional division would prejudice the final partition of the Province. I now see it has been made clear that the notional division is purely a temporary arrangement. If, however, it is used for setting up of Interim Ministries it will embitter communal relations and prove highly injurious to us, as I have already explained. Such interim Ministries functioning at the time when the Boundary Commission is also making its enquiries will make a fair examination of our case impossible. It is imperative therefore that till such time as the Boundary Commission has finished its work, no Interim Ministries in either part of the Punjab should be formed. If, however, it is considered expedient to form Interim Ministries, the Eastern Punjab should have in addition to the Divisions of Ambala and Jullundur, the three districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Lahore in the Lahore Division.
- (ii) The plan suggests that the Boundary Commission will take 'other factors' into consideration when making its enquiries. This is far too vague. It should be made

clear that these other factors include exchange of population with property and the basis of land revenue paid by non-Muslims. Special note should also be taken of the religious and cultural institutions of the Sikhs and the historic role played by them in the Punjab.

- (iii) As the partition of the Province has been necessitated to meet the Sikh demand clear instructions should be given to the Boundary Commission to ensure that as large a percentage of Sikh population as possible is included in the Eastern Punjab.

I should like to bring to your notice that though assurances have been given to us that we shall have equal rights with the two other major communities for the safeguard of our communal rights and privileges, nothing tangible has so far been done to give effect to these assurances. Our community is now in danger of being riven in two. We have so far not been assured equal rights with others in either the existing or the proposed new Constituent Assembly. We request you to see that this is done.

You mentioned during the Conference that in the interests of India, the Cabinet Delegation Plan of May 16, 1946, was still the best solution. You know the conditions on which the Sikhs provisionally accepted the Plan and joined the Constituent Assembly. If the major parties now revert to this Plan, the Sikhs will be prepared to accept it only if they are given the same right in communal matters as has been accorded to the other two major communities.

Finally, my Sikh friends and I accept the principle of division as laid down in the plan with the hope that in order to make it fully acceptable to my community, care will be taken to meet the views expressed in this letter when framing the terms of reference for the Boundary Commission.

Assuring you of my endeavour to help you in solving the difficult problems, I remain.

Yours sincerely,
Baldev Singh

40. 'Gandhi's Latest on India's Unity Is Very Late—Pir Ilahi Bakhsh'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 2 June 1947.

BANGALORE, Saturday.—'I am really amused to see the statement of Mr Gandhi, regarding the unity of India, which I believe is positively very late in the day, says the Hon'ble Pir Ilahi Bakhsh, Education Minister, Sind, in a statement to the "Orient Press of India":

'Mr Gandhi as most of us know, had himself been a party to the talks with the Viceroy and other leaders regarding the partition of India on the basis of Pakistan and Hindustan. He has in fact never uttered a single word against the establishing of an independent State of Pakistan, although in the beginning he did oppose this proposition, but when it actually became inevitable to accede to the demand of partition by Muslims, he showed his acquiescence by his alliance which usually amounts to consent in the Indian parlour.

'If I mistake not Mr Gandhi had agreed to this part of partition in black and white and had also signed the agreement, which was negotiated by the Nawab of Bhopal. But unfortunately he was compelled later on to back-out from the agreement by his lieutenants. Thereafter, he has spoken nothing whatever against the division of India on Pakistan and Hindustan basis.

'It is really surprising that Mr Gandhi should throw bomb-shell at the eleventh hour when practically every one has accepted the partition of India. Is it not really very strange that a great leader of Mr Gandhi caliber should act in this way?'

PAKISTAN INEVITABLE

‘Mr Gandhi knows that Pakistan is going to be established—rather it has already been established and there is no power on earth to stop it. The Musalman is determined to have his own independent national home, whether Mr Gandhi or the Congress likes it or not. It is inevitable and as such it must come. To this every body has to submit willingly or otherwise. There is in fact no other go than to have the partition of India on the basis of Pakistan and Hindustan. ...

‘How can Mr Gandhi say that it is not the function of the British to divide India when he has himself been accepting his awards and carrying on negotiations towards this end? We do agree with Mr Gandhi that the British should withdraw as early as possible and it may be, that his stay is the root cause of our disruption, I am certain, we shall be able to settle out differences later on whether willingly or otherwise. But how can Mr Gandhi ask the Britisher that it is not his business to solve the Indian problem, in view of the fact that the Britisher has practically finished his work and he has to make a formal announcement to this effect very soon.

‘Let me request Mr Gandhi that he should be a realist and accept the inevitable in good grace. Since he does not want the British to interfere with the Indian problem, let him make an attempt to come to terms with Qaed-e-Azam. If he is true in his professions, let him settle with Qaed-e-Azam, and stop the riot any further. But if he wants chaos and anarchy let me assure him that the Muslims are brave enough to face them boldly. Muslims do not dread death, which every human being has to accept, whether he wants it or not.’ ...

Chapter 17. Contending with Communalism

1. On Communal Violence in Punjab and NWFP

Extract from a Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to M.K. Gandhi, 24 March 1947

P.N. Chopra (Ed.), *Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, Vol. XII, pp. 17–18.

REVERED BAPU,

New Delhi

...The situation in the Punjab is incomparable to what it was in Bihar. More than 50,000 people must have lost their lives. Still there are no signs of improvement in the situation. The situation in the Hajara district is most alarming. It is the fortress of the League and its word is like a writ there. In Rawalpindi and Multan districts, several villages have been turned to ashes. Both Hindus and Sikhs have been the victim of this wrath. But the Sikhs have suffered more. People fought with bravery. Many women jumped into wells and embraced death. People resisted with all their might and when they found themselves surrounded by the hostile crowd, they fought and died as suicide squads. Several people have fallen prey to the bullets. Punjab is still restive. Now the military has been posted there. Hence uneasy peace is visible on the surface. But it is unimaginable when it will burst out again. Its spark may reach up to Delhi though we may possibly be able to control the situation. But I cannot write more of it through a letter....

VALLABHBHAI'S PRANAM

Mahatma Gandhi

Camp: Patna.

2. Demand for Strict Government Action against Muslims

API Report of a Statement by L.B. Bhopatkar, 1 April 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 33/11/47, NAI.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA
(Inland News Telegram)

For Press advice

Poona No. 3.

(General)

Poona, April 1

Mr L.B. Bhopatkar, president of the Hindu Mahasabha, in an interview today called for stringent measures to be taken by the Government in the country to 'crush in its inception the pre-planned civil war launched in the country by the Muslims', he demanded a speedy disarmament of the Muslim population, especially in the rural areas in Muslim majority provinces as also others and thorough overhauling of the police in the provinces. He said from

what he knew there was still going on smuggling of arms on a wide scale aided by 'elements which better be left unnamed'.

Mr Bhopatkar, who returned from a tour of the disturbed areas in the Punjab, said 'from what I saw in the Punjab and learnt about the outbreak in other places, including the invasion of Assam by the Muslims, I am definitely of the opinion that the atrocities committed, so far, are the outcome of a regular civil war planned before hand. It is to be particularly noted that the Muslim rioters and raiders are armed with tommy guns, rifles, pistols and spears. They have practically liquidated all the Hindus and Sikhs in most of the western districts of the Punjab and the adjoining districts of the Frontier Province, and after looting their properties burnt their houses. Added to this they have converted thousands of Hindus and Sikhs and carried away hundreds of young girls and women'.

Mr Bhopatkar urged the Hindus and Sikhs to 'realise the gravity and extent of the menace and be prepared to meet it fully armed for that purpose. [*sic*] Unless this is done and provincial Governments do their duty.' He added, 'evil days are in store for Hindu and Sikhs in all the provinces of the country'.—API

3. 'Vivisect Pakistan'

Statement by V.D. Savarkar, 2 April 1947

S.S. Savarkar and G.M. Joshi (Eds), *Historic Statements: V.D. Savarkar*, pp. 193–4.

'TO FRUSTRATE THE VIVISECTION OF OUR AKHAND HINDUSTHAN WE MUST FIRST VIVISECT THEIR PAKISTAN. TO THIS END THREE IMMEDIATE STEPS ARE IMPERATIVE. THE FIRST THE CREATION OF A HINDU PROVINCE IN WEST BENGAL, THE SECOND THE EXPULSION OF MOSLEM TRESPASSERS FROM ASSAM AT ANY COST, SO AS TO SANDWITCH AND SMOTHER THE EASTERN PAKISTAN BETWEEN THE TWO HINDU PROVINCES, THE THIRD THE CREATION OF A HINDU-SIKH PROVINCE IN EAST PUNJAB AND TO REJOIN THE CONTIGUOUS HINDU DISTRICTS IN SINDH TO THE BOMBAY PRESIDENCY. THUS ABOUT TEN LARGE HINDU PROVINCES WILL GET CONSOLIDATED INTO A STRONGLY CENTRALISED GOVERNMENT OF AKHAND HINDUSTHAN AND WILL ENABLE IT ALL THE MORE EFFECTIVELY TO REANNEX THE REVOLTING PAKISTAN AREAS TOO IN NEAR FUTURE.

BUT ALL THIS OR ANY OTHER JUGGLERY WILL FAIL TO HELP HINDUDOM IF WE DO NOT EMPHATICALLY DECLARE IT AND MANFULLY ACT UP TO THE RULE THAT THE MOSLEM MINORITY IN HINDU PROVINCES SHALL BE GIVEN THE SAME TREATMENT AS IS METED OUT TO THE HINDU MINORITY IN MOSLEM PROVINCES. THE VERY FACT THAT JINNAHJI, GANDHIJI AND HIS SHAHID SAHIB ARE PERCEPTIBLY IRRITATED BY THESE PROPOSALS DOES IN ITSELF PROVE THAT THEY ARE MOST LIKELY TO BENEFIT HINDUDOM AND UNDERMINE MOSLEM DESIGNS. CONSEQUENTLY INTENSE AGITATION AND ACTION SHOULD BE RESORTED TO BY US FORTHWITH TO EFFECT IT ALL.'

4. Appeal for Upholding Communal Peace

Extracts from Record of Interview between Louis Mountbatten and M.A. Jinnah, 8 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML.

The meeting lasted from 6 to 8 pm.

I asked Mr Jinnah whether he would be willing to join with the other high commands in issuing an appeal for no further provocative acts which could lead to bloodshed. He asked

me if I had seen in the newspapers an account of his speech in Bombay. I admitted I had, and acknowledged that he had already appealed for a truce; but I pointed out that a unilateral appeal appeared to me to be almost valueless, since the other side could always force bloodshed by their actions. He agreed and said that if I wished him to join in an appeal for a truce against provocative action and bloodshed, he would be prepared to do so. (As both Pandit Nehru and Sardar Baldev Singh had told me that their own high command would be prepared to do the same, this is a hopeful sign.)

Mr Jinnah explained the origin of 'Direct action', and said that until he had resorted to 'Direct action' the League position was becoming more and more insecure, but he denied that they had ever instigated bloodshed anywhere, though it could perhaps be said that they had created the situation in which Congress had started bloodshed (not Mr Jinnah's exact words, but he said something to that general effect)....

5. Joint Plea for Communal Harmony

Note by Eric Mievile about His Interview with M.A. Jinnah, 11 April 1947
TOP, Vol. X, pp. 198-9.

YOUR EXCELLENCY

I saw Mr Jinnah for half an hour this afternoon. He was at his very best. He started by recalling the luncheon party at which we were both present at Buckingham Palace last December and told me how much he had enjoyed it. He said that his enjoyment was enhanced by the fact that on talking to the King he found that His Majesty was pro Pakistan. On talking to the Queen after luncheon he found that Her Majesty was even more pro Pakistan, and finally when he had a conversation with Queen Mary he found that Her Majesty was 100 per cent Pakistan! I replied that I was sorry that their Majesties had acted in such an unconstitutional way as to express their opinions on political matters connected with their Indian Empire, at which he laughed quite a lot.

After a few remarks on Pakistan we got down to the draft statement which Your Excellency handed to him yesterday deploring the bloodshed and acts of violence throughout the country. He started by saying that in many of his speeches he had condemned such violence in far stronger terms than set out in the draft. I then pointed out to him that the whole object of the draft was that it should be signed both by him on behalf of the Muslim League and by Mr Kripalani as President of Congress. He replied that he did not think Mr Kripalani's name would carry any weight with the masses and in fact the only name that would do so in addition to himself was Mr Gandhi's. He then said that I could tell Your Excellency that if Mr Gandhi would put his signature to such a statement, as to the exact terms of which he was not particular (he quite liked the draft statement as set out but thought perhaps some amendments would be necessary) he would be perfectly ready to sign it himself.

He finally said that he must be frank and tell me that such a suggestion had been made by Lord Wavell on the occasion of the Calcutta riots and on that occasion Mr Gandhi had refused to sign on the grounds that he was no longer an active member of the Congress Working Party and that he held no official position at all. He did not know what Mr Gandhi's reactions would be in this case but repeated that so far as the masses were concerned he thought that from the Congress angle Mr Gandhi's was the only name that would carry the necessary weight.

E. Mievile

6. Statement against Communal Violence

Telegram from G.E.B. Abell to Hugh Dow, 13 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 110, NMML.

795-S. Please see that following Private and Personal message from Viceroy is given to Gandhi on his arrival in Patna tonight:

I so much enjoyed our talks during the past ten days and hope you have had a good journey.

Mr Jinnah is perfectly ready to sign statement deploring acts of violence etc. which you signed before you left Delhi provided that your and his signatures are the only ones that appear on the document. As you mentioned that you thought Mr Kripalani's signature might also be added, though I gathered that you did not make this a stipulation, I am not issuing statement until I hear from you. Pandit Nehru is agreeable to leaving matter to my discretion, but I feel I must have your views. Unless statement bears your signature alone Mr Jinnah will not sign. May I therefore appeal to you to agree. Please reply urgently.

7. Massacre of Innocent People Must Stop

M.K. Gandhi's Talk with Members of the Muslim League, 14 April 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, p. 283.

I firmly believe that if only the British quit India, we would almost be united. Why cannot the Muslim League see that the first thing for all is to end India's slavery? We may talk about partition after that. Either the Muslims regard India as their home or they do not. If they do, then this senseless massacre of innocent people should stop, the British should be made to quit and our own Government set up. We can then settle the question of partition by mutual persuasion or fight it out amongst ourselves, if necessary. But I do not understand why thousands of innocent people are being killed treacherously. And if the Muslims do not regard India as their home, the question of Pakistan does not arise.

The Muslim League friends replied that they also condemned such killings. Bapu said:

Then you should issue a statement to that effect on behalf of the local Muslim League and write to Jinnah Saheb. That would be true service rendered to the Muslim League, and thus you will not be subjected to unwarranted suspicion.

[From Gujarati]

8. Gandhi, Jinnah, and Kripalani Must Sign the Appeal for Communal Peace

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten, 14 April 1947

SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 331-3.

New Delhi

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

This afternoon Sir Eric Mievile informed me by telephone that you had received the following telegram from Mr Gandhi:

Just received your message. Many thanks. I had comparatively quiet journey. I am of opinion that President of Congress should also sign. You should know reason for the exclusion of President of the Congress. However I leave final decision to you and Panditji.

This has placed me in a somewhat awkward position. The proposal that the statement should be signed by Mr Gandhi, Mr Jinnah and Mr Kripalani was originally made by you, I think. I do not know if you had mentioned it previously to Mr Jinnah; but I gathered that he had agreed to this and laid special stress on Mr Gandhi signing it. Mr Gandhi consented to do so. Now for some special reason Mr Jinnah insists on the exclusion of the Congress President's signature. As Mr Gandhi points out in his telegram, the reason for this should be obvious. Apart from the reason, it involves a certain discourtesy to the Congress and the Congress President. It may also lead to some misunderstanding in the public mind.

2. I take it that it is your desire, as it is ours, to produce the maximum effect on the public mind. That would have been achieved by these three signatures. I am quite sure that the absence of the Congress President's signature will make a difference. So far as we are concerned, I had told you previously that we are all prepared to sign. Even now if it is considered feasible, some or all of the Members of the Interim Government could sign it, in addition to Mr Gandhi, Mr Jinnah and Mr Kripalani.

3. Mr Jinnah has often stated that Mr Gandhi does not represent the Congress organization. He is in a sense correct. Why then does he want Mr Gandhi's signature in his individual capacity and wish to exclude the Congress organization as such? Presumably because he wishes to emphasize not the organizational character of the signatures but the fact that, according to him, Mr Gandhi represents some kind of Hindu India and Mr Jinnah some kind of Muslim India. Mr Gandhi, of course, represents no such thing whatever Mr Jinnah may represent. In such matters we have to proceed on an organizational basis plus, if necessary, the addition of some name of authority and importance. We dislike greatly this approach of Hindu and Muslim India.

4. I have consulted both Mr Kripalani and such other of my colleagues as are available here and all of them dislike very much this suggested change in the procedure. It becomes a little difficult for us to act when a certain proposal is made to which we assent and then this has to be changed because Mr Jinnah changes his mind or is otherwise not agreeable. At the same time we are exceedingly anxious that everything should be done which might help in putting an end to the violence and conflict that is going on. We realize the value and importance of Mr Jinnah putting his name to the document and we would not like to come in the way of any such appeal being made. Our difficulty is that it is quite clear that Mr Gandhi himself strongly disapproves of the exclusion of the Congress President's signature. He has cast the burden on you and me to decide.

5. In view of the considerations I have placed before you above if you can find some proper and honourable way out of this impasse, I shall be grateful. If that is not possible, then I must leave it to your judgment and final decision as to what should be done. I shall abide by that.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru



9. 'Gandhi and Jinnah Denounce Violence'

The Tribune, 16 April 1947.

NEW DELHI, April 15.—Mahatma Gandhi and Mr Jinnah have denounced violence in a joint appeal issued today on the Viceroy's initiative. A communiqué issued from the Viceroy's House today says:

'On His Excellency the Viceroy's initiative and at his specific request Mr Gandhi and Mr Jinnah signed the following declaration and authorized its publication:

'We deeply deplore the recent acts of lawlessness and violence that have brought the utmost disgrace on the fair name of India and the greatest misery to innocent people irrespective of who were the aggressors and who were the victims.

'We denounce for all time the use of force to achieve political ends and we call upon all the communities of India, to whatever persuasion they may belong not only to refrain from all acts of violence and disorder but also to avoid both in speech and writing any incitement to such acts.'

M.A. Jinnah
(15-4-47)

M.K. Gandhi

10. 'A Parsi Approach to Hindu-Muslim Compromise'

Letter from Jal K. Wadia to M.A. Jinnah, 17 April 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 559-63.

275 BOW BAZAR STREET, CALCUTTA

Dear Mr Jinnah,

Herewith attached is a proposal drawn up by me in an attempt to find a way for Hindu-Muslim compromise. I forward, though hesitatingly, the same to you for your consideration, being situated as I am in a humble position.

Though expert players know the game fully, yet during the actual play a humble wayfarer at times can see more of the openings. This viewpoint has encouraged me to send the proposal to you. Please excuse me for the liberty taken of approaching you.

If at any time my humble services are required in this connection, I shall readily respond to your call in the interest of my country and shall act to the best of my ability in the then circumstances permitting me.

Copies of this proposal are also [being] forwarded to HE the Viceroy, Mahatma Gandhi and Mr Nehru for their consideration.

I have not released my proposal to the press and, before I do so, I shall await your kind reply and also those from the above-mentioned leaders.

Yours faithfully,
J.K. WADIA
L.D.Sc.

Enclosure

A PARSI APPROACH TO HINDU–MUSLIM COMPROMISE

The Parsis are peace-loving people and they have lived in India ever since their landing in this hospitable country in complete harmony and brotherhood with all communities. They have always regarded all Indians as their own and never hesitated to sacrifice what they could in the service of their countrymen. Today their hearts renders [*sic*] in pain and agony when they see their own people cutting each other's throat in utter hatred and distrust. In their eyes Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs are the same and regard their sufferings as their own. They appeal once again to these great communities to stop this slaughter. With this view, an approach is being made towards the Hindu–Muslim compromise. It is hoped that this appeal will not fall on deaf ears.

The Congress ideal of a United India, if it can be attained and maintained by all the Indians, can make this country a leading power not only in Asia but in the world. But, unfortunately, communalism, which is deeply rooted in all the communities in India, has created much suspicion and distrust to achieve the ideal. The suspicion and distrust created between the two major communities will, it is feared, bring untold calamity and weakness to India if the Congress ideal is persisted in without taking communalism into consideration.

Divided India, as demanded by the Muslim League, if made into a permanent settlement, will, it is believed and feared, make this country the Balkans of Asia, and will ever become the political chessboard of the leading powers that are infested with Imperialism. This country then will ever be weak and ever in danger of foreign aggression, either economic or military. It will be better for the Muslims and the Hindus and all other communities if complete separation is avoided....

The communal strife that is rampant all over the country will, if not checked, lead the country to a civil war or continued slavery under the foreign power in the name of the preservation of law and order. The threatened civil war must be prevented at all costs as it will bleed the country to utter weakness and to the death of independence....

Civil war then must be prevented at all costs and a compromise will be beneficial to both of them....

The proposal is based on a ten-year trial... During this period an attempt must be made to get rid of communalism completely and to ensure and preserve complete freedom of all communities, including the minorities. The followers of Gandhiji may of course attempt with all vigour to work out his ideal of one community, not by diplomatic duplicity or coercion or in any tricky way but by love, sincerity, faith in God, and sacrifices by one and all, beginning with the major communities. If this ideal is not accomplished during this period but is on the way and hoped to be accomplished then, with common consent the trial period may be extended. But if it turns out to be a total failure then, with or without foreign help, the division of India may be made. During this period all communities should be cautioned against foreign interference.

In this proposal there are Central Government and Provincial Governments with no grouping as proposed by the Cabinet Mission. The Provincial Governments should be given complete autonomy with very wide powers. The Central Government should have a minimum of subjects. During this trial period, the Provincial Governments under the guidance of the Central Government should lay out such policy, whether educational, political, economic or

commercial, that they may attempt completely to get rid of communalism, including suspicion and distrust—the greatest obstacle in the path of freedom and progress. All minorities must live without fear of being superseded and subjected to dependence and curtailment of freedom by the major community.

At the Centre, the allocation of seats should be done without taking into consideration the ratio of population....

With this consideration the seats should be divided in the ratio of 5:5:1. The two major communities get five each and the minorities, for example, Sikhs, depressed classes, Parsis, Anglo-Indians, and others, get one each.

As the joint electorate will not be acceptable till communalism is gotten rid of, separate electorates for all the communities should stay. For the good of India, the Congress, who have already made many sacrifices, should also make this sacrifice. Besides, they have very often expressed that as soon as freedom is won, the Congress will be dissolved. If this is going to be true then their claim of representing other communities will not arise when India is independent. The Hindu or Muslim seats should be equally divided among all the provinces so that each province may be sufficiently represented to protect the interests of the two communities. As regards other minorities, such as Parsis, Anglo-Indians, Sikhs, and others, the seats may be allotted to that province where there is the largest population of the particular minor community. The relaxation may be given to elect their representative from any other province whenever it is so desired. Facilities may also be provided to the members of the respective community residing in other provinces to take part in the election. Power should also be given to every province to adopt at any period the system of joint electorate, and this must be done not by the elected bodies but by the willing consent of the people of each community. They may also be given the power to form closer relations with any province or provinces in matters of education, commerce, communications and economics.

Portfolios at the Centre should be divided and grouped according to their importance and the important ones should be equally divided among the two major communities. Any important portfolio, if it is to be given to the member of any minor community, should be done with the consent of that major community which may have the right over it. The rest of the portfolios may be divided among the other communities. The important portfolios may be reshuffled between the two communities at the end of five years. The presidential chair should go preferably to a minor community in the beginning, elected by joint electorate. As to the Constituent Assembly, let each province have its own such Assembly, besides the one for the Centre, to draw up their own system of government.

Bengal and the Punjab have created a problem...In each of these two provinces there should be two Governments under one Provincial Government. The seats in the Provincial Government should be divided on the same basis as in the Central Government, that is, equal seats to Hindus and Muslims with seats to other minorities in the respective provinces. In the Punjab, the Sikhs should be included in the Hindu seats. These two provinces should have power to abolish partition whenever the people of the respective provinces so desire.

In the end it is hoped that this approach made by a Parsi, impartial and free from any prejudice, will be duly considered by the leaders.

J.K. WADIA



11. Follow Up of Gandhi–Jinnah Appeal

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten, 20 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 114A, NMML.

New Delhi

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

I received your letter No. 1427 dated the 19th April yesterday afternoon on my return from Bombay after my Gujarat tour.

2. In the message which I sent to the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference, I had already appealed to the Editors to assist Government in dealing with the difficult times through which we are passing. When I was at Surat, I received a suggestion from my Secretary that I should send another message to the Conference to take action regarding the appeal issued by Gandhiji and Jinnah. Since the League Press is not represented in the Conference, I thought it futile to make a suggestion to the one side only to follow up the appeal. I am, therefore, issuing another message to all newspapers asking them to print the Gandhi–Jinnah appeal repeatedly in a prominent position, and particularly at any time when local tension or similar circumstances require it. A copy of my message is enclosed for your perusal.

3. The All India Radio are being instructed similarly to use the appeal at frequent intervals, and in particular in their rural programmes which reach listeners who may not be able to read the newspapers. A letter is also going to all Associations of Film Exhibitors urging them to ask of their members to use the appeal on a cinema slide in various languages to be shown in intervals or at other appropriate times in their programmes. Finally, an Express letter is going to all Provincial Governments informing them of the action taken by us and suggesting that they should produce posters and leaflets in the languages of the provinces and give them the widest and most prominent distribution possible.

4. If you consider that my Department can be useful in any other way in this direction, please let me know, and I shall see that the needful is done.

5. But I feel I should be failing in my duty and be untrue to myself, if I concealed my innermost conviction that unless and until the Muslim League is compelled to withdraw its 'Direct Action' Resolution and this step is followed up by active attempts to keep its followers in check and under control, the necessary psychological atmosphere in which the appeal could strike a responsive chord would be completely lacking, and the appeal itself would not serve much useful purpose. It is futile to expect an ordinary man in the street to exercise restraint or to make any positive contribution to the restoration of feelings of amity if incidents are happening which outrage and inflame public opinion. After reading an account of the wholesale murders, looting, arson and forced conversions of non-Muslims in Dera Ismail Khan, there would indeed be few among them who would be able to pay any attention to an appeal to eschew violence. I am enclosing a typical example of the letters which I received from different corners of India together with the cutting to which the writer refers. I am also sending you another cutting which gives the allegations in greater details. Such are the events on which the mass mind is being fed and such is the reaction which is being produced. While untold sufferings and outrages are being perpetrated on non-Muslims and minorities are being systematically eliminated in the Muslim majority areas and organized wholesale preparations are being made to 'capture' the Province of Assam, without any corresponding effort on the part of the League leaders to deal with their followers on the spot, in contrast Gandhiji is

buried in the midst of his self-imposed mission in Bihar calculated to assuage the feelings of Muslims in regard to a tragedy which overtook them six months ago and which was quelled under the active intervention of Congress Members of the Interim Government within a week. The signature of Mr Jinnah on the appeal is a mockery if he does not himself feel the urge to visit the areas such as Dera Ismail Khan, Rawalpindi and Multan which are, or have been, the scenes of orgies of murder, arson and loot. If he is sincere in his appeal, his place is quite clearly in the Frontier to restrain his followers and not in Delhi.

6. Ever since you assumed office and I had my first interview with you, I have been pressing upon you the need for urgent action. While I do not deny that the signature of Mr Jinnah on the truce would be a creditable achievement, if sincerely followed up, I feel that the time which we are letting slip and every day that these tragedies are being perpetrated without securing positive action such as I have suggested above, would make the success of your mission more remote than ever. You have already acquired a reputation for being a man of quick decision and action and a person possessed of a great sense of urgency. India has also been impressed by the earnestness of purpose and the message of goodwill underlying your first speech on the assumption of office, but the sands of time are running out and I hope you will believe me when I say that the man in the street is already commenting that a month has elapsed, while bestiality still prevails in the NWFP and parts of Punjab and Bengal. I shall appeal to you with all the earnestness at my command to create, by securing a firm and positive action from the League such as I have stressed above, a psychological atmosphere in which the excellent appeal issued by both the leaders will touch the hearts of the people. Therein lies the only chance of putting an end to the tension and the insecurity, which poisoned the atmosphere, ever since the passage of the 'Direct Action' Resolution in July and the first sample of its enforcement on 16th August 1946, has created and continued to promote, and, which the attempts of the League, after the declaration of the 20th February, to 'capture' the Provinces of Assam, NWFP and the Punjab have accentuated, and to the resultant tragedies which have overtaken thousands of men, women and children.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

12. 'Communal Troubles Must Be Stopped at Once'

Extract from the Inaugural Address by Jawaharlal Nehru at UP Political Conference at Mau, 20 April 1947

SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 333–5.

...The country is facing two major problems, economic and communal. Economic problems will have to be faced even after freedom has been won, but the communal problem has to be solved immediately. It must be made clear that the communal quarrels lead us nowhere. Pakistan cannot be achieved by resort to force and violence....

People should keep calm in the face of provocation and should not resort to inhuman deeds. As regards the disturbances in Noakhali, Bihar, Punjab, Frontier, Bombay city and some places in UP it is an extremely distressing fact that men have behaved like beasts. When men degrade themselves to the level of beasts, it badly reflects on the nation to which they belong. If anyone thinks that by such villainous violence political ends will be achieved, it is a grave and a sad mistake.

It is India's misfortune that communal troubles are taking place at a time when the country should stand united. Those who are resorting to force for achieving political ends are very much mistaken. Such methods will not help them. India cannot force any part of it to remain in the Union, but such bits of it as want to get out have no right to break away other parts which do not want to do so. Moreover, in the world of today, small countries have no future until they align with a big one. Therefore the loss will be of Pakistan if it wants to keep out of Hindustan.

The Muslim League can have Pakistan if they wish to have it, but on the condition that they do not break away other parts of India which do not wish to join Pakistan. I hope that the promoters of Pakistan will realize their mistake soon. Breaking away from the rest of the country will not help them.

It is a matter of shame that people who have fought the British Government so bravely are quarrelling among themselves on a very low level, stabbing each other in lanes like cowards. Gandhiji has been preaching nonviolence for the past 30 years. But I am glad that Mr Jinnah also adheres to a belief against violence. I hope those who follow Mr Jinnah will give up the use of violence....

British rule is going and has got to go and it will soon go. It will be a great event but our responsibility will also increase a hundred-fold. It is this that you must realize and rise to the occasion. The greatest need is to keep united at present when the British are leaving the country and Indians have to take power from their hands. I am fully aware of your difficulties but would ask you to realize that great changes are taking place in the country. Times like these are necessarily accompanied by disruption of the smooth functioning of life. People must have patience. There is no justification to lose heart. India is in the midst of a mighty revolution....

13. Patel Comments on the Gandhi-Jinnah Appeal

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to M.K. Gandhi, 21 April 1947

P.N. Chopra (Ed.), *Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, Vol. XII, p. 64.

REVERED BAPU,

Received your letter at Bardoli. I had gone to Bombay and Gujarat for five days. In Bardoli, Kishorlalbai, Swami, Narharibhai and others were there.

In North-West Frontier Province both Hindus and Sikhs are butchered.

In Calcutta also the condition of Hindus is worsening.

I did not like the appeal published in paper in yours and Jinnah's name. It is against your understanding. But now what can be done? I was not here.

I am trying about Kashmir. I will let you know if something good emerges from it.

Vallabhbhai's Pranam

Mahatma Gandhi,
Camp: Patna.



14. 'No Solution on Basis of Pakistan'

The Tribune, 23 April 1947.

SULTANPUR, (ODUH) April 22.—I heartily endorse the peace appeal issued by Mr Gandhi and Mr Jinnah. It is no doubt early to say what effect it will produce on the prevailing discontentment in India, but its ultimate effect depends upon the spirit in which it is taken, said Mr Ali Zaheer, a former member of the Interim Government and President of the All-India Shia Political Conference in an interview.

He added: 'The events that are taking place in the Frontier are by no means communal, but they are a tussle between the Jinnah dominated League on the one hand and the Congress on the other. The bloodshed that is prevailing in different parts of India can stop in a minute if Mr Jinnah is sincere about it. Every thing is good on paper, but goodwill can only be restored if leaders of different political parties really strive for it. I refuse to believe that the masses have got out of control. Mr Jinnah has as much hold on Muslim League masses as Mr Gandhi has on Hindu masses.

'The present atmosphere is undoubtedly charged with suspicion and mutual distrust but we will have to adjust ourselves in view of the impending transfer of power by the British. To whom the British Government is going to hand over power in June 1948 is too early to forecast....I doubt very much if agreement can be reached on the basis of Pakistan. We must, however, endeavour to achieve peace among the rival communities and then solve our problems in a dispassionate atmosphere.'—API

15. 'Momin Conference President Suspended: Irresponsible Statement'

The Tribune, 23 April 1947.

ALLAHABAD, April 21.—The working committee of the All-India Momin Conference which met here since yesterday, in a resolution, passed today severely criticized the statement issued by Mr Zahir-ud-Din, the President of the Conference on March 19 last advising Momins to join the Muslim League against the accepted creed and policy of the Momin Conference.

The working committee has suspended Mr Zahir-ud-Din, the President of the Conference and has demanded from him an explanation by May 10 for the 'unauthorized' statement issued by him. The committee has reserved further action against Mr Zahir-ud-Din pending his explanation.

Mr Abdul Qayum Ansari, Vice President of the Conference and a Minister of Bihar Government, has been elected Acting President owing to the suspension of Mr Zahir-ud-Din by the working committee.

The following is the full text of the resolution passed by the Working Committee of the All-India Momin Conference.

'The Working Committee of the All-India Momin Conference expresses its deep sense of resentment, indignation and abhorrence at the wholly irresponsible and uncalled for statement of Mr Zahir-ud-Din, the President of the All-India Momin Conference, which he has issued to the press on March 10, 1947, in which he has completely allied himself with the Muslim League and supported the demand of Pakistan and has advised the Momins to join the Muslim League against the accepted creed and policy of the Momin Conference.

‘In the opinion of the committee, Mr Zahir-ud-Din, by his hasty and thoughtless act, has not only gone against the very fundamentals of the Momin Conference, of which he was the President, but has sought to lower and undermine the prestige and position of the Momin Conference which it has acquired through the service and sacrifice of the Momin nation in the estimation of the world.

‘Further the committee strongly feels that Mr Zahir-ud-Din by his improper and inconsiderate statement has placed the Working Committee in a very awkward, peculiar and difficult position. The committee is fully conscious of his constitutional position, but at the same time his undemocratic and unconstitutional activities have left no alternative for the Working Committee but to take very serious and drastic steps in the matter in order to vindicate and re-establish the position of the Momin Conference.

‘The committee after careful consideration of every aspect of Mr Zahir-ud-Din’s statement, the situation created by it and the incalculable damage and injury already caused and likely to be further caused by such acts of his to the interests of the country in general and that of the Momin nation in particular, considers it to be its painful but obligatory duty to take the extraordinary step of suspending him forthwith from the position of the presidentship of the All-India Momin Conference and calls upon him to submit his explanation, if any, by May 10, 1947, after which date further action will be taken in the matter.’

Hon’ble Mr Abdul Qaiyum Ansari was elected acting President of the All-India Momin Conference in place of Mr Zahir-ud-Din, President who was suspended from acting as such.—API

16. Criticism of Congress Policy towards the League

Extracts from a Letter from Ashrafuddin Ahmad Chowdhary to Vallabhbhai Patel,¹
30 April 1947
AICC Papers, File No. CL-8/1946, NMML.

My dear Friend,

The latest developments in the political situation of the country appear to be most uncertain and confusing. I would request you most earnestly to let me know clearly the fullest implications of the resolution regarding the division of the Punjab. This significant resolution of the W.C. has encouraged the executives of the Bengal Provincial Congress to formulate a resolution regarding the division of Bengal. May we know what is the fundamental basis of the resolution of this nature? Is it not adopted on religious basis? If so, you accept the theory and principle of Pakistan however limited by its geographical area... the Congress Muslims differed from the League fundamentally on the issue of Pakistan. Now by adopting the resolution of the division of the Punjab and indirectly of Bengal, you have conceded the demand of Pakistan. After the adoption of this resolution what may be our reason to keep aloof from the League organization?

Since the August killing, the Working Committee of which you are one of the leading figures has not given any direction on working scheme to counteract this [*sic*] barbarous activities of the League. You have simply succumbed to this goondaism and unsocial activities of the League organization at every stage. I feel, at [*sic*] the Congress claim to represent all sections of Indian people, it should have long come forward to defend the hearth home and honour of

innocent Indian men and women in an organized manner. Instead, you have become only an onlooker of this dreadful drama which is being performed on the stage of India from one end to the other. You are only trying to appease the League at every stage of this painful drama. You have failed miserably to discharge your duties and obligations to the millions of Indian people by your weak kneed policy.... Would you please cry a halt to this policy of yours and give a lead to the Congress men in India by organizing them to defend themselves from hands of League hooligans?.... From all indications available it appears you have agreed to the division of India into several sovereign states call it Pakisthan or Hindusthan. We cannot yet persuade ourselves to accept such a scheme which we consider to be absolutely detrimental to the best interests of Indian people including those who call themselves Muslims. Why should the innocent Hindus and Muslims be victims for nothing? It is a fight between the Congress and League organizations. If it is inevitable which appears to be so let the members of two organizations fight it out amongst themselves with whatever arms each can secure and decide the issue once for all. Neither the League people nor the Congress people as a whole understand the nonviolent gospel of Gandhiji. You desire a peaceful transfer of power from the hands of the British Govt, but how can that happen when the British is determined to throw you in the arena of fratricidal war. Pray, therefore do not for Heaven's sake run after this mirage of peaceful transference of power.

Some of you are holding the Interim *gadi* of Govt and think that you have no duty now to direct the members of your organization to face all eventualities in a courageous manner. You appear to be busy with the day to day files of the Govt when the whole country is burning. May I appeal to you with all the earnestness that I can command to gird up your loins and organize the Congress in a befitting manner to meet courageously the unsocial menace of the League.

I am expressing in this letter my deliberate views on the problem facing us today. I am serving the country through the Congress since the last 27 years and therefore claim the best considerations of my views by you as leaders of the organization to which we all belong....With best wishes and prayer to Allah to guide you aright at this critical juncture of Indian history.

With kindest regards,

Yours very sincerely,
Ashrafuddin Ahmad Chowdhary

¹ This letter was forwarded by Patel to Kripalani whose reply is reproduced as Document No. 20 in this chapter.

17. Communal Propaganda: The Scheme of Pakistan

Extract from Correspondence in Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, April 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 37/2/47, NAI.

**Home Member's Office
Intelligence Bureau,
(Home Department)**

With reference to D.I.B. u.o. No. 3/YM/47-P, dated 14.3.47 a book similar to the one entitled 'Khilafat Pakistan Scheme', but printed in a different place, is forwarded herewith. This

book, which was obtained from Karachi, is not a new publication, but appeared two or three years ago.

E.J. Beveridge
Assistant Director (S).
7/4/47

Home Department (Mr Porter)
D.I.B. u.o. No. 3/Y.M./47-P, dated 7 APR 1947
Encl. 1 Attached.
MV. 5/4/47

Submitted with papers.

2. The book has been read in office. It is the same book that was reviewed in the article in the *Purushartha*, and its synopsis given therein, though it does not cover all its objectionable features, is correct. It is a most objectionable book. Its theme briefly is that the ideal of every true Muslim is world conquest by war and violence, that the preparations to this end should be secret, that the worst man among Muslims is better than the best among non-Muslims, that nobody who is not a Muslim is fit to be called a man, that the interests of non-Muslims are worth nothing where Muslim interests are concerned, that the only criterion of virtue is the promotion and spread of Islam, and that non-Muslims do not deserve to live except as slaves of Muslims.

J. Bedekar
9/4/47

...

H.M.

H.M. considers that any steps against the publishers and printers of this pamphlet will unnecessarily secure publicity for it, whereas it appears that the pamphlet has received practically no publicity and has probably been forgotten altogether even by those who may have received it. H.M. is, therefore, writing to the Home Minister, Bombay, that he does not consider that any notice need be taken of this pamphlet.

17/4/47
V. Shankar
Private Secretary.

Full translation of an article headed 'The Scheme of Pakisthan' published in the *Purushartha*, a Marathi monthly published in the Aundh State, for August 1946.

The matter placed within brackets in the following translation does not occur in the original except where otherwise indicated by a note in the margin.

The Scheme of Pakisthan (Review)

The Musalmans of the League want Pakisthan. Pakisthan means a 'holy place', a completely independent Raj of the Musalmans. League leaders have placed their scheme before the public by publishing a number of small and big books about the Pakisthan scheme. The gist

of this scheme is to form a Western Croops [*sic*] of the Provinces of 'Sind, Punjab, Baluchistan, NW Frontier Province and Kashmir' and establish an independent Muslim Raj there. Similarly, in the East, 'Bengal and Assam' should be formed into a group and independent Muslim Raj be established there. Not only should there be no control of the Indian Central Government on these two Pakisthani States, but also the corridor joining these two States should be under the control of the Pakisthani Government.

Moreover, several Leaguers are also writing that the Nizam's Dominion in the South is already a Pakistan. It should be included in Pakistan because the ruler... the Nizam State is a Musalman. Kashmir must be included in Pakistan because the Muslim subjects there are in a majority. The reason of the majority of the subjects be applied only to Kashmir and the standard of the ruler's caste should be applied to Nizam Hyderabad. After this some have gone even to the extent of (demanding) that several small Pakisthani States should be formed in India. Leaving aside these extreme views all Leaguers are unanimous on the point that the above-mentioned Provinces in the West and the East should be considered as independent Pakisthani States.

It must be considered how the idea of an independent State, which was absent till yesterday, arose to-day in the minds of the Muslims, born in India, speaking Provincial languages and wearing Provincial dress till yesterday. Why have these people begun to say to-day that their language is Arabic-mixed Urdu, that their cap is the Turkish cap, that their holy place is in Arabia and that they are not Indians? Even if independent States of Pakistan are formed in the West and the East, what about the (fate of) half of the Muslims who remains in Hindusthan? Muslims of what place speak Arabic-mixed Urdu and even if such a language is deliberately cultivated, can the dealings of the Muslims, who are mixed up with the Hindus of all Provinces, be carried on with that Urdu? But the Leaguers have decided not to think of all the difficulties. It is their definite opinion to-day to establish independent Muslim Raj called Pakistan at all costs.

Books on their scheme have been published in English and also in Urdu, and several Hindu thinkers have considered the possibility or otherwise of this scheme, and almost all non-Muslim writers generally have declared the Pakistan Scheme to be harmful from the economic point of view and impossible from the point of view of defence, and thus to be worthless. Some say, as Pakistan can never be safe, grant it, so that the Muslims will know by experience alone that Pakistan is impracticable and then they themselves will come and join the Central Government.

Such different views of Muslims and others have been published up to now. All these need not be considered together. That would be a waste of time.

However, the Muslims are only our own brothers. They are our countrymen, as they are born in our own country, hence it is proper that we should get ourselves acquainted with their views. For this purpose, we are reviewing here in this article an important book of theirs so that the readers may know the ideology at the root of Pakistan.

'Khilafat—Pakistan-Scheme'

This book has been published one year ago by the 'Punjab Muslim Students Federation' at the 'Lion Press, Lahore' (Punjab). Its price is eight annas and it is available only to the Muslim public. Its language is pure Urdu and the script also is Urdu. As it contains the main thoughts on Pakistan and for the reader to know these thoughts, we give here those thoughts briefly, but

without making any change in those thoughts just as they are in the original book. The writer in propounding his subject says (lit. writes):

Khilafat—the Ideal of Pakisthan

1. 'The Muslim League is the largest representative organization of the Musalmans, but since even this organization is working only on the lines of Mr Gandhi's non-violence and satyagraha it has still not taken to the pure ideology of the Musalmans. The way of us, the Musalmans, is to cause all sorts of "antagonism" and our method is to "bring about revolution by offering opposition". It is not our practice to go by an open and constitutional path. Freedom, the protection of our rights and the prestige of the community cannot be obtained as gifts from others.... The community which has capability can keep all its rights safeguarded without asking for any one's order without begging for any one's mercy, without vilifying any one, with our own efforts and by becoming independent ourselves'....

3. 'According to Islam the Musalmans in all the countries and all the Provinces are one and there is no difference among them. Why are we then thinking only about the Musalmans in India? The answer to this is that once we have room for planting our feet independently and our feet are firmly planted in those Provinces where we are in the majority, then we shall find it easy to turn attention to people in other provinces.'

4. 'When the League firmly plants its feet in the Group of the Eastern and Western Provinces, where the Muslims are in the majority, and the power of ruling over them comes into our hands, then we can easily accomplish our object (lit. task) by surrounding the people of other religion—the Hindus—from both sides and by encouraging the Musalmans there. This ideology exists primarily behind the idea of Pakistan. After our feet are firmly planted in the Punjab and Bengal, our programme will be to gradually encourage Musalmans in other provinces and make them create riots and in this way to constantly keep up our aggressive policy.'

Scheme

5. 'There are four kinds of places in the world (1) *Darul-Islam* = the house of Islam, (2) *Darul-Kufr* = the house of the Kafir, (3) *Darul-Salam* = the safe place where Islam is professed and (4) *Darul-Harab* = where there is no Islam, the country of the Kafirs. To cover the entire universe with our religion is the goal of our scheme. That there should be no kafirs on this earth and that only Islam should pervade everywhere is desirable for us. This is the ideological foundation of the Scheme of Pakisthan'....

8. '(The question as to) how the Muslims are superior to non-Muslims is not going to be answered in Legislative Council or (Round table Conference), that has already been answered several times in the past on the extensive maidan of Panipat and will be answered in future also at a similar place if any one wants it.'

9. 'Just as it is right that animals and plants should be sacrificed for the life of man, on the same principle the every kind of sacrifice of those of other religions for the benefit of the Muslims is quite just and right. Just as it is not right to give unnecessary trouble to animals, but when the interests of man and beast begin to clash against one another, it is only proper that the beast should be sacrificed for the good of the man, in accordance with the same principle, none should give unnecessary trouble to non-Muslims, but when the interests of the Muslims and non-Muslims will clash, then it is only just that others should be sacrificed for the sake of the Muslims. True, it is improper to cut the throat of a hen, but when a man feels hungry and

feels like eating it, then it must be cut for the sake of a man. This should also be taken in the same way.’...

11. ‘No one should think from this that the Muslims are going to enjoy themselves by sacrificing others. It is not at all so. When the time comes for waging war for the sake of Islam, the Musalmans also gladly sacrifice themselves by declaring ‘Jihad’ and they also regard that by doing so they attain martyrdom.’

12. ‘We attach no value absolutely to the interests of other people when the interests of the Musalmans are involved. The question before us today is how to bring about the uplift of the Musalmans and how to destroy if necessary, the strength of others for doing that. Though man is superior, if he falls among a herd of wolves, they will eat him up. In the same way, if the Musalmans of India merge into the majority of the Hindus, they will perish. Not only this, but if all Indian Musalmans do not draw up a scheme and go on that scheme, even then they will perish. That is why we have drawn up this scheme of Pakistan for the uplift of the Musalmans.’...

14. ‘We shall never beg from any one. We all Musalmans are the protectors of this world and God has appointed us as the *Darogas* on this earth. The land of our *khuda* (God) is the triangular¹ piece of the golden land. Till two hundred years ago we Musalmans had the pride of wielding authority over it. Till the year 1860 there was over this country the rule of our *shariyat* (the Islamic law). We are to-day considering what part of this country will come amicably into our hands from the hands of traitors.’²

15. ‘As extensive and as integral a part of the territory in India, where the Musalmans may be in a majority, must remain only under the control of the Musalmans. Some Musalmans outside will remain under the control of those of other religions, but we cannot help it to-day.’

16. ‘Cast a glance over the map of India, there is a State³ of ours in Southern India. It has not survived on the strength of our majority, but it exists because of its own former glory. If we try just to-day to paint that State with our Islami colour, it would be to our own detriment to do so just to-day. Thereby all our future plans will collapse completely. Therefore, it is the only proper course to allow it to remain as it can to-day. So long as we cannot plant our feet firmly in our majority provinces, so long we should not start our work vigorously in other places.’

17. ‘The territory between the Ganges and the Jamna and the adjoining territory are such that there is our majority. The Provinces of the Punjab and Bengal are not joined together. They are far distant from each other. Being distant they cannot meet each other. Only for the above reason we must get the Ganges–Jamna tract in the UP that joins the Punjab and Bengal. Lucknow is the father of our Urdu language, while Agra is our centre of historical importance. Delhi is the living place of our Empire itself. That is why, it is only proper that the territory of Bengal along with the corridor of Delhi, Agra, Lucknow, from the Punjab should remain only under our authority.’

18. ‘Only the Musalmans are the perfect (lit. fully elevated) men. It is, therefore quite obvious that only the Musalmans will have the right to vote in Pakistan. If the Musalmans instead of doing any piece of work themselves entrust it to others, then that work will be given to others in Pakistan. The Government in Pakistan is going to be a combination of democracy and dictatorship: This is called *Khilafat*.’⁴

19. ‘In our Government the Prime Minister shall be only a Musalman, he shall be called “Amir-ul-Mominin” (Chief Amir of Muslims). He shall be invested with full powers in respect of Government and religious administration.’

20. 'It is the duty of every Musalman to wage a religious war by sacrificing his all for the sake of his religion. There can be various types of fighting according to the strength of each. All our strength will be for the protection of Islam and for fighting with *Kafirs* those who may not be able to meet their expenses in (doing) this, will be paid adequate salaries by the Pakistan Government. Those non-Muslims who will join this army for the above purpose—for the protection of Islam—will not have to pay communal tax. (Others, because they are not Musalmans, will have to pay poll-tax).'

21. 'There shall be a separate Department for the propagation of Islam in the Pakisthani *Raj* and all the forces of the entire *Raj* shall always be ready behind it. All sorts of concessions will be available for this Department.'

22. 'Under the Pakistan State there shall be no taxes except *Zakat* (fortieth part of the savings payable only by Muslims), *Jesiya* (poll-tax) and ... (Islamic tax). All the land will be regarded to be belonging to the Khalifa of Pakistan. In Khilafat⁵ Pakistan there will be no *zulum* on non-Muslims. Levying the *Jesia* on them is not to practice *zulum* on them. If non-Muslim embrace Islam or join our army and are prepared to offer their lives for carrying on the propagation of Islam, they shall not have to pay this tax. Similarly, those Musalmans who will not carry on the propagation of Islam, shall also be taxed. Therefore, it is not true to say that there will be *zulum* practiced on others by this arrangement.'

[*Jesiya* is a tax to be levied on the *kafirs* (A capitation tax levied by Muhammadans on infidels). The remaining two taxes are to be levied on income.]⁶

How Will the Work Be Carried On?

23. 'When we shall get a separate territory in India for our Khilafat—Pakistan and our foot is firmly planted there, then we shall start plants for wielding authority over the whole of India which we had wielded in the past.'

24. 'The advice not to indulge in riots has had a most undesirable effect on our Musalman community. Our tenacity has been lost because of this propaganda. If we bring that tenacity into our community it will be impossible for others to scheme against us.'

25. 'The Congress and he who is called 'Mahatma' are doing the work of dividing the Musalmans in India. They are incessantly trying to destroy our Khilafat and Pakistan movement and merge all Musalmans in one nationality of India.'

(Pakistan scheme ends.)

Editorial Commentary

The main trend of thought in the book 'Pakistan scheme' is given above very briefly, but without omitting a single point and without adding anything of our own. These books are sold in the Punjab only to the Musalmans. They are not sold to others. We secured them with efforts and have placed before the readers the thoughts therein. These books have spread much in the Punjab, Sind and other parts wherever the Musalmans stay, and all the programme of the League is carried on, and is going to be carried on also in future, in accordance with this ideology. 50 years ago they had put forward only the question of music before mosques. At that time they had not taken even the name of Pakistan, that has come forward to-day after 50 years. Their knack of advancing forward by taking each step gradually according to their fixed plan and setting firm the step taken, is highly commendable. 50 years ago they put forward only the question of the music before mosques. Even then they were decided on what to do

in future. But because it was improper to put it forward at that time they had kept it a secret for so many years. This restraint of theirs is really praise-worthy. The readers should recall to their minds their movements during the past 50 years so that they will come to know that their movement is continuing steadily with a fixed ideal. They assimilate whatever is obtained and are taking steps forward patiently. To constantly keep on organizing themselves and take a step forward, this practice of theirs is going on ceaselessly for 50 years.

Late Maulana Shaukat Ali had once remarked: 'I consider even an insignificant Musalman to be superior to "Mahatmaji"'. Mahatmaji had also justified those remarks. The readers should look up the same sentence here in the 7th paragraph. From this it can be known how their ideology is.

Although this book was published in this form last year, these articles were first published in 1939 in the 'Civil and Military Gazette' of Lahore, and again in 'The Times of India' of Bombay in the same year. Thereafter, these thoughts were once again published in book form. Thus four editions of this writing were printed. They have given such (a wide) publicity to this book. However, the readers should note here that Government has not launched any prosecution against these author and publisher for spreading communal hatred. If a Hindu publishes such thoughts, other Hindus will certainly condemn that, but besides he will not fail to get imprisonment under section relating to promoting enmity between communities. But nothing of this kind has happened to this author; so much are these thoughts being fondled by Government.

Look at the 15th paragraph above, they have to give Islami colour to Nizam Hyderabad. This is the aspiration of Pakistani leaders. But after they set their feet firmly in the Punjab and Bengal, they are going to implement the scheme for forcible conversion of religion on the Deccan (lit. south) Hyderabad. That will not come forward now, of course, this ghost of Pakistan is not going to be satisfied if they secure the Punjab and Bengal, but it is going to increase thereafter on a larger scale. Those who say that religion has place in politics should necessarily pay attention to this. We also really feel that religion should have no place in politics; but so long as one community makes its own organization by sheltering behind religion and wishes to establish the rule of its own religion in future by causing religious revolution and says that others will not have the franchise, and (when) that community has already won 450 seats out of 500 seats for persons of their own views in the last election, and (which community) has already used threatening language, 'politics of India must shape according to our dictates, otherwise we shall enforce Nadirshahi', not only this, but has already introduced Nadirshahi at Aligarh and Ahmedabad. When one community becomes overbearing in the name of religion, others must also organize themselves to such an extent as at least to carry out self-defence. Otherwise others have no safety. It is a fact that the Government concerned has not been able so far to give protection to Hindus at Aligarh and Ahmedabad in spite of its good intentions.

In the friction between the liberality of the Hindus and the selfishness of the Leaguers the Hindus have no saviour, such has been the situation. Therefore, it is most necessary here to suggest that the Hindus should not adopt an aggressive attitude, but that they should organize themselves at least for protecting themselves.

The community, which draws up its Scheme and by an aggressive policy according to that scheme keeps on overriding others continuously for 50 years, cannot be satisfied by (making) generous gifts (to it). Because, all that was worth giving such as Khilafat movement, blank cheque, parity, etc., has been given. That has not lessened (subdued) their aggressive policy, but, on

the contrary has increased. So it is now proper for the Hindus to form their own organization which will be capable of protecting themselves. It is not thought that any one can give anything more than a blank cheque. This is the limit of generosity. But what did that achieve?

There is now no need to review this book any further. Every sentence in it expresses the mind of the League. However, the Hindus, instead of adopting an aggressive policy, should adopt a defensive policy, and at least show by action that they shall not be lost.

There are two ways for settlement for peace. The first way is to please the other party by generosity. That was resorted to during the past 25 years. It had no desired effect on the Leaguers. Not only this but they have taken the maximum possible advantage of that every time. The time has now come for following the second course for ensuring self-defence. Self-defence is the birth-right of every one. Self-defence does not mean aggression on others. When the aggressive people of the League will realize that the Hindus have become capable of defending themselves and that they will not now sink down with force, only then a change in their aggressive policy is possible and thereafter alone all can live happy and contented.

Every man has the right of self-defence from his birth. The Hindus were not using that right up to now. They were committing this offence. They should not commit that offence hereafter. This is the only way of peace and amity that now remains. So long as the Hindus are not able to protect themselves, so long they will not have protection.

At present some are suggesting that thousands of men should be prepared to die peacefully without striking, go and stand before the aggressors of the League and gladly die after being stabbed with their knives. (They) should give them as many victims as they want to take, so that the soul of the League will be pacified, and then peace would reign everywhere. But this pious remedy will produce no effect whatsoever on those whose programme itself includes a definite scheme for reducing the population of others and draws up a scheme also for swelling their own population by any means whatsoever. If the experience of the past 65 years is taken into consideration it is clearly apparent that this experiment will not bring success. However, those who believe in this experiment may give as many thousands of victims as may be taken. (And) see what happens after offering the victims. Even if it is decided to offer victims in such a manner, there is no reason for delaying the drawing up of the programme, that is to be drawn up for the Hindus themselves to become capable of protecting themselves. Because, we do not at all come in the way of offering victims.

Those who want to offer themselves as victims should raise their own 'Sacrifice-corps'. No one should deter them from that task. But others also should not dissuade those who want to be capable of protecting themselves. These should form their 'Defence Corps' and do whatever they can for protecting themselves.

After the administration of the Provinces, which are to go into the hands of the League, passes into the hands of the League, and their seat there becomes firm, even greater ravages than these will have to be faced. The Hindus must become capable of protecting themselves by organizing themselves at least to such an extent that they will be able to withstand that aggression and remain alive. There is now no alternative left except that.

D.O. No. 2174/5-Poll

SECRETARIAT

Bombay, 25th April 1947

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your demi-official letter of the 17th instant regarding the booklet 'Khilafat Pakistan Scheme'.

We agree with the views expressed by you in respect of the booklet and are now not taking any further action in regard to it.

Yours sincerely,
Morarji Desai

¹ India.

² Traitors = the British and Hindus (Congress).

³ Nizam's Domonions.

⁴ This means, democracy will be for the Musalmans, while dictatorship for others. For the sake of Khilafat thousands of Hindus and their Shankaracharyas had gone to jail (in 1920), this is the reward they will now get for that.

⁵ Hindus will have no right over land.

⁶ In English in the original.

18. Communal Outlook of Congress Ministry in Bombay Denied

Extract from an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and B.G. Kher, 3 May 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 193, NMML.

I asked him what truth he considered there had been in the Muslim League charges that the Congress Government in Bombay between 1937 and 1939 repressed the Muslims. He refuted this charge heatedly, and said that the only three points that had ever been brought up were:

- (a) That Muslim children in schools were obliged to sing the Hindu national song.
- (b) That the Congress flag was hoisted on public buildings.
- (c) That textbooks supplied by the schools had chapters on Christ, Mahomed, Buddha, etc., devoting an equal amount of space to each, and causing offence to the Muslims through the juxtaposition of Mahomed and other religious figures.

He said that the action his Ministry had taken was:

- (a) To order that if even one member of a class objected to the singing of the song it was not to be sung.
- (b) To direct that if anyone objected to the hoisting of the Congress flag it was not to be hoisted.
- (c) As regards this point Mr Kher explained that these textbooks were issued on the authority of a Committee of which a Muslim was Chairman, and was a matter for local authorities.

He assured me that beyond that, nothing harmful had been done to the Muslims and that they had been well treated. He said that they were also being well looked after now, and he did not think they had any genuine cause for complaint.

I congratulated him on having a quiet Province, and asked him to give me an account of the communal troubles that there had been.

He said that they had been relatively small in extent, and that his Government had passed a law to the effect that the opposite community was to pay for the damage to property of the

other community, and this had had a most salutary effect both in reducing the damage and in encouraging the members of both communities to join together to put out fires, etc.

I told him I thought this should be a general law in all provinces, and he told me he had made this proposal to the other Provincial Premiers at their recent meeting, and that they thought it was a very good idea.

He confirmed Mr Patel's story that the previous Inspector-General of Police in Bombay had been entirely unsatisfactory, but not for the reasons given by Mr Patel, namely that he was pro-Muslim, but because he was soft-hearted and fell over backwards in trying to be fair to minorities. When finally he (Kher) was able to convince the Governor that he should go, the new IG had restored complete law and order in Bombay within three days, and there had been no serious trouble since....

19. 'League Leader in No Reasonable Frame of Mind: Mohan Lal Saxena's View'

The Tribune, 11 May 1947.

NEW DELHI, May 10.—Mr Mohan Lal Saxena, MLA, (Central) in a statement to the press says:

'The father of the nation and the father of the two-nation theory have met once again and dispersed. One wonders what useful purpose these meetings serve except to tickle the vanity of the League leader, who enjoys the courtesy of receiving the old man at the entrance and to raise fresh hopes in the hearts of Gandhiji's followers.

'Mahatma Gandhi has his own approach to questions as also his own way of doing things and he was at pains to assure his colleagues who did not approve of his meeting Mr Jinnah that thereby he had secured a veto to all forms of violence to achieve political ends. But the lengthy statement which Mr Jinnah has been pleased to issue upholding the decision of the NWFP League to continue their present movement belies that expectation.'

NWFP Movement

'Who does not know that the League movement in the NWFP is wholly communal? Did it not start with the demand of the restoration of a Sikh woman who had been forcibly converted and married to a Muslim after her husband had been done to death during the communal riots? Not only that, even Abdul Qayum Khan, the Leader of the League Party in the Legislature, had supported the demand at a public meeting held in defiance of Section 144. Again, I am reliably given to understand that even during the visit of Lord Mountbatten, the demand for the restoration of the said Sikh woman was reiterated.

Hundreds Killed and Converted

'Is it not a fact that hundred of members belonging to the Hindu and Sikh minorities in the province have been killed, looted and forcibly converted as a result of this very movement which he has laboured to prove to be political and in defence of civil liberties and which is now to be carried on with his blessings? And Mr Jinnah has the cheek to compare it with the civil disobedience and other non-violent forms of activities of the Congress which till now he has repeatedly denounced and condemned.'

Inflammatory Speeches

'It lies ill in his mouth to say that the Direct Action contemplated by the League resolution visualized mass civil disobedience when speeches were delivered under his very presidentship by his lieutenants eulogizing the acts of Chengiz Khan and Halakoo and it was deliberately made out that jail going was unmanly and sinful and further subsequent to the passing of the resolution, Muslim League leaders went about talking throughout the country in the same strain and holding out threats to the Nationalist Muslims, and the minorities, and unrestrained by Mr Jinnah. Even now Mr Jinnah, in his long statement, has no word of condemnation for the forcible conversion and marriage of the poor Sikh woman and similar other acts.'

Challenge to Jinnah

'He has referred to the disastrous activities of the Congress since 1921, but I respectfully challenge him to cite a single instance where innocent men, women and children were so brutally treated or, in the case of any misguided act on the part of the public, it did not bring the severest possible condemnation from Congress leaders.

'Mr Jinnah has in the end pressed for fresh elections in the NWFP but he has cleverly avoided mentioning Pakistan for he knows that only a year ago the elections were fought and lost on this one issue.

'I am sorry that Mahatma Gandhi's methods have failed to convert Mr Jinnah or bring him down from the high horse he has been riding. He will not come into a reasonable frame of mind unless he is made to realize that it would not pay any longer to play the dangerous game he has been playing and also that two can play at it.'

Leaguers in Hindustan

'The Congress Working Committee has done the right thing in taking the first step in that direction by demanding for the partition of the Punjab and Bengal on those very grounds on which Mr Jinnah wants Pakistan. This move has made Suhrawardis and Mamdots think and sing in a different tune.

'What is still further needed, is that the Muslim Leaguers of the so-called Hindustan provinces which have supplied the leadership to the League should be made to understand that with the establishment of Pakistan on the basis of the two-nation theory of their leader, they should be prepared to be treated as aliens in the provinces where they have been born and bred up where their fore fathers have lived for generations and where their remains would be buried till the Day of Judgment.'—API.

20. Congress Is Non-violent and Non-communal

Letter from J.B. Kripalani to Ashrafuddin Ahmad Chowdhry, 13 May 1947
AICC Papers, File No. CL-8/1946, NMML.

Dear Friend,

Your letter of the 30th April was directed to me by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. He thinks you have raised some fundamental question of Congress policy. I do not see what fundamental question you have raised. It is difficult for me to separate your question from the many denunciatory adjectives you have thought fit to use against the organization to which you owe allegiance.

The Congress has always declared that it will not coerce any area to join the Indian Union against its expressed wishes. This in concrete terms means that if the Muslims in their majority areas want what the Muslim League calls Pakistan, the Congress, consistently with its declared policy and its creed of non-violence cannot resist this demand. The Muslims of India are today organized by and under the League. There are other organizations that also claim to speak for the Muslim community. But such organizations have not captured, I am sorry to say, the mass-mind. The nationalist Muslims have no hold on this mass-mind. Under these circumstances if the bulk of the Muslim community want the division of the country and the British Government that hold sway in India today, back up this communal demand I do not see how the Congress can resist it. It cannot surely be resisted by non-violent means. It may be resisted by violence. But the Congress creed precludes it from using violence. Moreover any use of violence will fall most heavily on the innocent of the communities who are our own country men and for whom the Congress has worked for the last three quarters of a century.

You say in your letter that the quarrel is between the Congress and the League but have you observed that when violence is used it is not the members of the League or the Congress that are slaughtered but the innocent of the two communities, who have often nothing to do with either the one or the other organization. In the Frontier the quarrel is between the Congress ministry and the League and yet when actual violence is used its victims are exclusively the innocent Hindus and Sikhs who are not Congressmen. In Behar many innocent nationalist Muslims were slain in the riot. When actually violence begins it takes exclusively a communal character. It is a fight between Muslims on the one side and the Sikh and Hindus on the other. I do not see where the Congress comes in anywhere here. The Congress may have been guilty of many sins of commission and omission but it has never been a communal organization. In all its dealings with the League, Mahatmaji and the Working Committee have always been guided by the leading nationalist Muslims in the Congress. In its policy towards the Muslims or the League the Congress was first guided by the Ali Brothers and then by Dr Ansari and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. After the death of Dr Ansari it has been guided by the Maulana Sahib and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. What more could it do?

All that the Congress seeks to do today is to rescue as many areas as possible from the threatened domination of the League and Pakistan. It wants to save as much territory for a Free Indian Union as is possible under the circumstances. It therefore insists upon the division of Bengal and Punjab into areas for Hindustan and Pakistan respectively. I do not see what else the Congress can do under the circumstances. The division of India is not of your seeking. The sin of it must lie on the shoulders of the Muslim League that has misguided the Muslim community.

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani

Sri Ashrafuddin Ahmad Chowdhry
PO Suaganj,
Tippera (Bengal)



21. Need to Strengthen Police Force

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Prime Ministers of Congress-administered provinces,
15 May 1947

P.N. Chopra (Ed.), *Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, Vol. XII, p. 95.

NEW DELHI

MY DEAR PRIME MINISTERS,

I am sure the increasing communal tension and the probability of its accentuation in the event of an announcement regarding transfer of power, if it is not wholly satisfactory to the Muslim League, will have attracted your attention already. I feel, however, that urgent consideration should be given to the consequences which might ensue and the measures which should be taken both to forestall or deal with them, should situation so demand.

Recent events in the Punjab and the Frontier and the aggressive attitude adopted by the Muslims in other Provinces indicate a possible very serious challenge to law and order in the coming months. It would be risky to rely entirely on the Armed Force to deal with such a contingency. It is quite likely that these forces would have demands elsewhere, which might seriously affect their mobility as well as availability. It is, therefore, necessary that you should immediately review your Police strength with a view to augmenting it or its equipment in order to deal with any such situation. Should you feel that the forces at your disposal are inadequate or need arming, I suggest that you should take initial action to this end at once; and, if necessary, recruit a sufficient number of special Armed Police to supplement the existing forces. It is essential that the Police Force should not only be well-equipped, but its discipline and morale should also be of the highest standard. Vigorous action must, therefore, be taken to deal with any signs of indiscipline or any attempts on the part of any Party or Organization, subversive of such discipline. The loyalty of the Police must be ensured and no impression should be given that there is lack of confidence either in its integrity or dependability. Between the Ministry and the Police Force as also the general administrative machinery, there should be a feeling of mutual confidence and trust. It is needless to say that Ministerial interventions in petty matters, which will have the effect of undermining the loyalty and morale of the Force or between the Service and its superior officers, should be avoided at all costs.

The Conference preceding the issue of the Declaration has now been postponed to the first week of June. The critical period, in my view, would come about some time after the issue of the Declaration. Time is, therefore, short; but I hope you will be able to adopt substantial measures by the time.

Yours sincerely,
VALLABHBHAI PATEL

The Prime Ministers of Bombay, CP and Berar,
Madras, Assam, Orissa, Bihar and UP

22. 'Arms Check-up in Cawnpore'

Statesman, 23 May 1947.

CAWNPORE, May 21.—In view of the tense situation in Cawnpore, the District Magistrate of Cawnpore, has decided to check up all arms and ammunition in the district of Cawnpore.

The District Magistrate by an order has directed every person in possession of a duly licensed gun, rifle, revolver, pistol or any other kind of fire-arm to report to the Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Bilhaur, within a week of the publication of this order, the total amount of ammunition which he possesses.

The public has also been warned that searches are liable to be made if it is suspected that the information given is wrong.—API.

23. 'Gandhiji's Advice to Sindh Hindus'

Extract from a Report from *Harijan*, 25 May 1947.

Gandhiji's timely clarification of his advice to Sindh Hindus has heartened them to face the future with courage and fortitude. Asked to clarify his advice that Sindh Hindus should migrate in the event of partition, Gandhiji told Bhai Pratap Dayaldas of Hyderabad who met him at New Delhi:

'I said that you should suffer bravely, but non-violently unto death. But if you cannot do that and must take a disgraceful surrender of all including honour, your womenfolk and religion, in that case, the only and safe proper course for you to take is migration, not singly, but of all the Hindus and other non-Muslims.'

To a further query as to what would be the plight of the minorities in Sindh in the case of a partition of India, Gandhiji replied:

'That question is to be fought out in the Constituent Assembly, but I am certain that all protection that is humanly possible will be stipulated for. You must not be weaklings.'...

24. Anticipation of Communal Trouble in Assam

Telegram from Akbar Hydari to Jawaharlal Nehru, 30 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 5/56/47, NAI.

CONFIDENTIAL

6601

TELEGRAM GRADE 'C'

From..... SECGA, Shillong

To..... Foreign, New Delhi

No. 807/C

Dated (& Received) 30th May 1947.

TOO. 1035

TOR 1730

MOST IMMEDIATE

For Pandit Nehru From Hydari.

In months ahead I apprehend three possible sources of trouble.

1. Mass incursions from outside province joining excited elements within;
2. Communal trouble aggravated in certain parts by communist incitement to disorder; and
3. If one and two materialise trouble from tribal side. If one or other of these possibilities actually happen on a big scale or if we are faced with all three more or less together

one leading to the other, present armed strength at disposal of Province will not be sufficient to deal with situation effectively. This amounts to 2,850 armed police including jail force and five battalions that is 62 platoons of Assam Rifles. From indications I have had it seems military aid from Central Government who have themselves grave responsibilities in other areas would be difficult to provide and even if provided might come too late to prevent widespread loss of life and destruction of property. Prudence dictate Assam being assisted to take measures herself to meet menace.

2. To meet this situation I request sanction to increasing strength of Assam Rifles as soon as possible by 38 platoons...

PS TO HM NEF DR (3) FS OSD JS(X) JS(F) JS(C)
DS(X) US(CA) PSV (2) CABINET SECY.
HOME SECY DEFENCE SECY CR DEPTT
(SECY & JT SECY)

25. Demand for United India with a Strong Central Government

Statement by V.G. Deshpande, President, All India Hindu Students Federation,
31 May 1947
AIHM Papers, File No. C-165, NMML.

New Delhi

Mr V.G. Deshpande, President, All India Hindu Students' Federation has issued the following statement with regard to the modifications in the demonstration to be staged on the 2nd June 1947:

'On representation from the District Magistrate and the local officials that the communal situation in Delhi has become tense and demonstration before the Viceroy's House would further deteriorate the situation, we have modified the plan of demonstration on the 2nd June. Instead of demonstration before the Viceroy's House there would be a complete Hartal in Delhi and a public meeting in Dewan Hall at 4 P.M. the same day in order to record Hindu India's opposition to vivisection of Hindustan in any shape or form.

'We are opposed to conceding Pakistan whether it is full-fledged Pakistan of Jinnah's type or the trunketed [*sic*] Pakistan which is an illegitimate child of Rajaji. We are opposed both to sovereign Bengal a creation of the unholy alliance between Sarat Bose and Surhawardy [*sic*] and the sovereign Pathanization of Khan-Khanna axis. As an alternative we do not support Cabinet Mission Scheme which also is a paraphrase of Pakistan. We stand for United India with a strong Central Government powerful enough to interfere in Provincial matters and readjustment of the present Provinces of Punjab and Bengal to suit the changed conditions.'



26. Patel Objects to Attack on the Government of Bihar

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten, 1 June 1947

SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 389–90.

New Delhi

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

I am sending herewith a copy of the report which has appeared in the Dawn of the speech of my honourable colleague, the Minister of Health, at Patna.

2. I am sure you will agree with me that it is most improper and thoroughly objectionable in its attack on the provincial administration. I thought that, after the manner you proposed to tackle Nishtar about his speech condemning the Frontier administration, such things would not recur, but this one beats the rest and I feel that if the Provincial Government had externed or arrested him for making this sort of speech, I for one would certainly have upheld their action. If such things go on, I shall have the greatest difficulty in persuading the provincial administrations concerned to restrain their hands.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACTS FROM A SPEECH BY GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN

AS REPORTED IN *DAWN* ON 1-6-47

‘Brethren, I wish to assure you that even though I could not personally come here during those days, my heart and my full sympathies were with you as fellow Muslims.

‘In the Punjab, about which I can speak with intimate knowledge, a wave of horror went throughout the province and the nature and extent of the crimes that were committed against the weak minority here earned unbounded sympathy for the sufferers. There was grave danger of a sudden outburst of Muslim feelings in the Punjab, which would have taken an ugly turn, but this danger was averted only by the strict discipline maintained by the Muslim Leaguers. Even our women workers insisted on sending a special deputation to succour and console their unfortunate brethren and sisters. A deputation of Muslim women accordingly toured Bihar under the leadership of Begum Tasadduq Hussain, one of the two women members of the Punjab Assembly.

‘Recently I saw a Press statement issued by the Premier of Bihar giving the number of firing carried out by the police before Sardar Nishtar and Pandit Nehru visited this province. Technically the statement may or may not be correct. For instance, the Premier would be correct in his statement even if here and there the police party fired a few rounds only to help rioters, which I am told was exactly what happened....’ He said there were fundamental differences between the Muslims and the Hindus. ‘People like Mahmud Ghazni and Aurangzeb are our national heroes but they are considered by the Hindus as their greatest enemies. Similarly, Shivaji is considered by us as our arch-enemy but is revered by them as a national hero. What we eat away is considered by them the greatest god.’

Chapter 18. Communalism: Provinces

A. BENGAL

1. Worsening Communal Violence in Calcutta

Telegram from N.C. Chatterjee to S.P. Mookerjee, 28 March 1947
AIHM Papers, File No. C-136, NMML.

INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT

POSITION CALCUTTA CITY SIMPLY INTOLERABLE STOP CITY POLICE COMMUNALISED STOP DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF NORTH AND SOUTH DISTRICTS ARE MUSLIMS STOP MUSLIM NATIONAL GUARDS PERMITTED TO POLICE THE MAIN THOROUGH FARES CAUSING GREAT APPREHENSIONS STOP HINDUS IN VARIOUS AREAS BEING PERSECUTED AND TORTURED STOP MUSLIM HOOLIGANS NOT BEING ARRESTED NOR PROPERLY DEALT (50) WITH STOP MILITARY NOT YET CASSED [sic] OUT SITUATION DETERIORATING STOP PRESS GAGED [sic] AND NEWS NOT REFLECTING REAL SITUATION UNLESS CENTRE INTERVENES AND TAKING IMMEDIATE STEPS APPREHEND SERIOUS DISTURBANCES THROUGHOUT BENGAL ESPECIALLY IN EASTERN DISTRICTS STOP

----- NC CHATTERJEE PRESIDENT HINDU MAHASABHA-----LN137

2. 'Military Open Fire on Calcutta Rioters'

Extract from a Report from *The Hindustan Times*, 1 April 1947.

CALCUTTA, March 31.—Twenty-eight incidents mostly confined to North, East and Central Calcutta were reported last night and up to 10 p.m. today. 'The police and military fired 56 rounds in connection with arson, rioting and attacks,' states a Press note issued by the Bengal Government. ...

Forty two persons are reported to have been injured and five killed since yesterday night, adds the press note.

There was some tension in Howrah as a result of about 20 incidents which occurred in Malipanchgora, Howrah, Bali and Shibpore thanas. These included 12 cases of arson. More than 100 rounds were fired by the police and military.

Curfew has been imposed in the police station areas of Shibpore, Bali, Jogacha and Sankrail, in Howrah. It will be operative from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. Curfew is already in force in the police station areas of Golabari, Howrah, Malipanchgora and parts of Bantra. ...



3. Report on Bengal Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bengal for Second Half of March 1947, 3 April 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.

I—Political

1. The larger political questions which tended to dominate the political scene during the first part of the month have been pushed into the background with the recrudescence of communal trouble in Calcutta and Howrah during the present period. The disturbances themselves, essentially communal in character, would be referred to in greater detail in the Communal section.

2. Despite attempts, subsequently made, to link the disturbances with Pakistan Day on the one hand and the visit of Master Tara Singh to Calcutta on the other, there seems to be no adequate grounds for holding that the disturbances were in any way directly connected with these events: they can be adequately and sufficiently ascribed to the present communal tension and the likelihood of trouble breaking out on the smallest provocation. It is possible, however to draw certain conclusions from the troubles now in progress. Started by the Muslims living in one of the most notorious *bustees* in North Calcutta the incidents themselves have come as an unpleasant surprise to all political parties, for it was the policy of none of them to have a recurrence of such troubles at this stage. It was certainly not the policy of the Communists who were anxiously looking forward to making the threatened general strike on the 28th March a success and whose activities are seriously hampered by communal strife, a rigid enforcement of the 144 order and imposition of the curfew. Neither was it the policy of the Muslim League or the Congress who have both denounced the recurrence of trouble and who have worked to prevent its spread. All parties have, in fact, been united in desiring that the troubles should end forthwith and considerable efforts have been made by political parties to bring about a cessation of the incidents. A disquieting fact, already brought prominently to notice during the troubles of August to October last year, has been the complete inability of political leaders to control situations such as the present. The ability of the irresponsible elements to distract the life of the city by stabbings, arson and looting is a most disquieting factor for the future.

3. In the face of the communal tension and immediate politico-communal problems in the provincial sphere the wider problems in the all-India field have been given less and less attention. Generally speaking all parties are suspending judgment and waiting on the decision to be taken by their political leaders at the Centre.

4. Efforts still continue in Hindu circles to focus attention on the question of the separation of West Bengal and to keep this problem prominently before the notice of interested persons. It is to be presumed that advantage will be taken of the recurrence of trouble in Calcutta and Howrah to emphasize the desirability of separating off from the Muslim section of the Province. The Burdwan Commissioner reports that the movement has been gaining strength in West Bengal and that agitation in its favour is going on in all the districts of the Division in spite of the declared opposition of Mr Gandhi and Mr Sarat Chandra Bose. Local Congress organizations have been active in support of the movement, as also the Hindu Mahasabha. The proposal to hold a meeting early in April at Tarakeswar sponsored by the Mahasabha will undoubtedly focus attention on this problem to a still greater degree. During the period several meetings have been held in support of the proposal, notably a conference convened

by "Major-General" A.C. Chatterjee at which a proposal was made to form a committee which would include N.C. Chatterjee and Shyamaprasad Mookerjee of the Mahasabha, to conduct the movement for the partition of Bengal.

5. The visit of Master Tara Singh to Calcutta during the period had several purposes, not only the raising of funds for rehabilitation work in the Punjab but also to ensure that the Hindus and the Sikhs in Bengal remained firm in their demand for partition of the Province. Such activities are reported to have been much resented by the Muslims in Calcutta, the view being taken that partition would be part of the Congress Hindu Mahasabha move to crush the Muslims in their aspirations.

6. Pakistan Day was celebrated in Muslim circles on the 23rd. Considerable fears were entertained before that date that communal disturbances might break out as a result of the holding of meetings and processions and steps were taken to ensure that public meetings were avoided in those areas where prohibitory orders were in force. The day passed off without incident throughout the Province. In Calcutta flag hoistings on houses and shops, private meetings and illuminations were the main features of the celebrations. The most numerous meeting was held at the Muslim Institute where 3,000 were present and resolutions were passed reaffirming the faith of the Muslims in the ideals of Pakistan. In Dacca the Pakistan Day was particularly widely celebrated. In Chittagong the Day was celebrated throughout the Division and while there were apprehensions of trouble in Chandpur and parts of Noakhali adequate precautions were taken and the celebrations passed off smoothly. Special efforts were undoubtedly made by the Muslim leaders to avoid any semblance of provocation and to abide by the instructions issued by Mr Jinnah....

II—Communal

13. The communal situation, outwardly comparatively quiet during the last few weeks, deteriorated considerably in Calcutta and Howrah from the 25th onwards. Prior to the outburst of trouble on the 25th there had been trouble on the 16th following the explosion of two crackers late at night. Stoning of passing vehicles ensued and several stabbings occurred. Conditions returned to normal following the intervention of the police. On the 25th, however, following the rumour, subsequently found to be false, that a Muslim woman and a Muslim boy had been killed there was fresh outburst of communal trouble. Muslims of the notorious Kalabagan *bustee* area started the trouble and on that night the police had to open fire on five occasions, tearsmoke being used twice. The incidents had been confined almost exclusively to the nine police stations of Central and East Calcutta; the southern parts and the extreme northern parts of the town have been hardly affected at all during the period under report. Some incidents have been reported during the period, resulting in 43 being killed and 351 wounded. The incidents have taken the form of stabbings together with a number of riots, cases of arson, looting and acid throwing. The military were called in on the night of the 28th and have dominated two police-stations and are patrolling vigorously a third. Despite considerable efforts of Peace Committees and political leaders it has not been possible to bring the situation under control. Transport has been affected to some extent and considerable tension exists in the affected areas. During the first few days of the disturbances there was no appreciable effect on the conservancy services in the town but towards the end of the period the usual demand, bound to grow in intensity, for guards on conservancy and ration vehicles is being made.

14. Fortunately the disturbances have not spread to 24-Parganas and Hooghly but Howrah has been affected, and following a deterioration in the situation the military were called in there to assist the police on the night of the 30th. The incidents there which have included 38 cases of arson and 10 cases of looting have resulted in 18 deaths and 35 injuries; a feature of the situation in Howrah has been the use of modern weapons by members of both communities.

15. Elsewhere in the Province there have been, as yet, no repercussions following the outbreak of trouble in the Calcutta area. In the Burdwan division outside Howrah town the situation is generally quiet and Midnapore is reported to be almost normal. In the Presidency Division the only trouble centre at the moment is Santipur where orders under section 144 still remain in force. In North Bengal the only incident of importance has been the outbreak of hooliganism on communal lines in Bogra. There has fortunately been no further deterioration in the communal situation in East Bengal though feeling everywhere continues to be strained. The National Guards have been much less in evidence in Chittagong town following deterrent action by the National Guards provincial leader with a corresponding improvement in the situation. In Noakhali and in the Chandpur subdivision of Tippera, however, the release on bail of many of the accused persons in riot cases has led to panic among the Hindus and incidents, indicative of communal tension, have been reported from both the Noakhali and Tippera districts.

4. Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha Conference at Tarakeshwar

Draft Resolution by Ashutosh Lahiry, 6 April 1947

AIHM Papers, File No. P-107, NMML.

Resolution I

Whereas the League Ministry of Bengal has failed to assure safety and security of life, property and honour of the Hindus of Noakhali and have persistently refused to take such steps as may have a chastening effect on the aggressive goonda element of the District such as apprehension and punishment of murderers, abductors, looters etc., imposition of punitive tax or collective fines, administration of relief in adequate measure to the oppressed and despoiled Hindus; and whereas this sinister policy on the part of the ministry has been an encouragement to the Goonda element and has made it impossible for the Hindu refugees to return to their home district and for those who returned, to stay and live with self-respect and safety; and to be forced again to abandon afresh their home, with the result that the entire district of Noakhali and part of Tipperah are now threatened, even after six months of the tragic occurrence, with whole-sale evacuation and desertion of their home and property, reducing about two lakhs of Hindu population to a state of utmost helplessness,

2) Whereas the League Ministry has failed even to utilize for relief the sum of rupees three crores sanctioned by the Government of India out of which only sixty lakhs have been distributed to the sufferers—which have amply demonstrated the callous and anti-Hindu attitude of the Government.

3) Whereas the League Ministry with the aid of State funds has been assisting settlement of Bihar Muslims in Bengal and have diverted for this purpose substantial amount of money which should have been primarily devoted for the alleviation of the sufferings and for the uplift

and development of the sons of the province and whereas this has created a sense of great insecurity amongst the Hindus of the province.

4) Whereas the League Ministry has been importing Pathans and Frontier people for enlistment in the armed police forces, depriving the inhabitants of the province of opportunities for service which rightfully belong to them, and whereas this mischievous policy is inspired with the sole object of creating a militant Communal armed force for suppressing the legitimate rights and interests of the Hindus.

5) Whereas the League Ministry has been enacting expropriatory [*sic*] legislation such as waste lands bill etc, which is designed virtually to confiscate large tracts of land owned by the Hindus with evident objective of Moslem outsiders being settled on them, and whereas the League [*sic*] Ministry has been systematically using Governmental authority for facilitating the establishment of Pakistan with complete disregard for the interest of the 45 per cent of the Hindu population of the province.

6) Whereas the League Ministry has demonstrated its utter incapacity to maintain law and order and assure safety to the peaceful citizens and has been regularly encouraging the ruffian elements by failing to bring to justice thousands of persons guilty of heinous offences, who have made life in Calcutta and various other parts in Bengal almost insufferable.

- i. This Conference of the Hindus of Bengal asserts that, the League Ministry has completely forfeited the confidence of the Hindus and that any further continuance in power of this Ministry is bound to lead to far more disastrous consequences and province-wide chaos and confusion and the conference therefore demands that the ministry be immediately removed.
- ii. The Conference expresses its determination not to submit any longer to the domination of purely Communal Ministry, which has brought about untold sufferings to the Hindus of the Province and which has paralysed normal life for years and has made it difficult for Hindus to live and to carry on their usual avocations with self-respect and security. The Conference, therefore, urges on the Hindus of the Province to resist the continuance in power of such a Communal Ministry by all peaceful means.
- iii. The Conference desires to impress on the Hindus that it is an act of shameful treachery for any Hindu to be associated with such an obnoxious Ministry and calls upon the Hindu Ministers to resign in the common interest of the country. The present Hindu Ministers have been guilty of desertion and betrayal, and they are helping to maintain an erroneous appearance of the Ministry being non-communal. Hindus can no longer permit this false show to continue, without gravely endangering their vital interests. The Conference therefore, urges on the Hindus to take appropriate action for securing the resignation of the Hindu Ministers.
- iv. The Conference is of opinion that the Hindu members of the Legislature have been incapable of rendering any useful service to the Country by their active participation in the work of the Legislature and have failed to achieve the purpose for which they have gone to the Legislature. The time has now arrived when they should withdraw from the Legislature and leave to the Moslem members the sole responsibility of such legislation as the Ministry proposes to enact and tear off the false mask of legislation being carried through with the joint deliberation of Hindus and Moslems alike. The Conference therefore, calls upon the Hindu members to forthwith withdraw from the Legislatures.

- v. The Conference is of opinion that at this critical period when the future of the Hindu inhabitants of the province is so gravely imperilled, it is essential that all shades of political opinion that are opposed to the suicidal policy of the League Ministry should combine and create a common front and make united efforts for carrying to fruition the policy and programme out-lined above. The Conference, to this end invites the co-operation of all such groups and parties.
- vi. The Conference declares that a day of mourning be observed throughout Bengal on the 20th of April with a view to galvanise public opinion and prepare the country for the effective execution of the programme.
- vii. The Conference authorizes the president to form a Council of Action and to take such other steps as may be necessary for the purposes stated above.

Resolution II

The Conference enjoins on the Hindus to speedily form Hindu militias called 'Hindusthan National Guards' or Hindusthan Rastra Sena in every Union of the Province with a view to defend the interests of the Hindus and maintain peace and tranquility within their jurisdiction.

5. 'Migrate from Noakhali: Gandhi's Advice to Hindus'

Dawn, 9 April 1947.

Mr Gandhi, replied to complaints 'of increasing lawlessness in Noakhali section of Bengal' on Monday in New Delhi that 'case seems to be for exodus or perishing in flames of fanaticism'.

Mr Gandhi said that he left his walking tour of Noakhali and the trip of Bihar at the behest of the new Viceroy, Lord Louis Mountbatten for discussions about Britain's exodus from India by June next year. On Monday, he made public telegrams from Congress workers in Noakhali in which they described attempts to burn persons alive.

After wiring to consult among themselves and decide whether the Hindus should leave the predominantly Muslim area of Noakhali, Mr Gandhi sent this telegram to the Bengal Prime Minister, Mr H.S. Suhrawardy. 'I continue to receive doleful wires about prompt action. I am publishing wires. Gandhi.'

Satish Chandra Das Gupta, Bengal Congress worker, was quoted as saying that there had been five cases of arson since March 23.

Mr Gandhi replied to him: 'Case seems to be for exodus or perishing in flames of fanaticism.'—APA.

6. 'Gandhi's Telegrams on Noakhali Responsible for Fresh Troubles in Calcutta: Suhrawardy'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 11 April 1947.

Calcutta, Thursday.—Bengal Premier, H.S. Suhrawardy said here today that Thursday's 'sharp recrudescence of trouble in Calcutta was the direct result of the publication of Mr Gandhi's telegrams on Noakhali.'

He explained that such telegrams create a panic in the public mind 'making it falsely appear that the whole firmament was falling down.'

The premier said that the 25-hour curfew imposed in some of the areas in Calcutta 'under my orders is only the first instalment of the more drastic steps I am determined to take on misbehaving sections.'

Mr Suhrawardy said that if the Indian problem was to be settled at all by 'open fight, let it be said so and get started,' and added he found 'no use in these indisciplined indiscriminate assaults.'

The Bengal Premier said that wide and mass arrests would not always be a satisfactory solvent of the trouble. 'Firstly so long as there are persons to bail them out and secondly so long as the public mind does not set itself definitely against such communal disturbances.'

Noakhali Officers Summoned

Mr Suhrawardy indicated that he has summoned the District Magistrate of Noakhali, the district superintendent of police and the deputy inspector-general of police of the Chittagong division for a conference with him in the Secretariat on the situation in Noakhali.

The Premier said he was going to tell them that 'nothing untoward should happen in their jurisdictions and that they will be held responsible for any recrudescence.'

7. Adjust Bengal Assembly Dates according to the Constituent Assembly Session

Telegram from Kiran Shankar Roy to Vallabhbhai Patel, 12 April 1947
SPC, Vol. V, pp. 55-6.

Calcutta

THE BENGAL GOVERNMENT DESPITE REPEATED REQUESTS WANTS TO CONTINUE AFTER SHORT ADJOURNMENT ASSEMBLY SESSION FROM 18TH INSTANT TILL JUNE ACCORDING TO INFORMATION AVAILABLE NOW. INTENSE RUSHING THROUGH MANY HIGHLY COMMUNAL AND CONTROVERSIAL MEASURES IN PRESENT TENSE ATMOSPHERE. TWELVE BENGAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS ARE ALSO CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY GENERAL MEMBERS OUT OF WHOM TEN BELONG TO OUR PARTY. ALL SUCH MEMBERS WILL HAVE TO BE ABSENT FROM BENGAL ASSEMBLY TO ATTEND CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY SESSION. EXTREMELY UNFAIR IF ASSEMBLY SITTINGS NOT ADJUSTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY SITTING. WROTE GOVERNOR REQUESTING PROROGATION WHICH IS UNDER CONSIDERATION. SEEK YOUR INTERVENTION.

KIRAN SHANKAR RAY
 LEADER CONGRESS ASSEMBLY
 PARTY BENGAL

8. Report on Bengal Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bengal for the First Half of April 1947,
 17 April 1947
 Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.

II—Communal

11. The communal situation in the Province has inevitably been coloured by the continuance of the disturbances in Calcutta though fortunately there have been few outward manifestations of communal hatred in the districts during the period.

12. In Calcutta some improvement in the general situation was noticed during the first half of the period, but unfortunately there has been a marked setback during the last half of the period following the throwing up [*sic*] of a bomb at one of the relief lorries of the Muslim Relief and Defence Committee, resulting in the death of one and serious injuries to other occupants of the lorry. Apprehension and tension are widespread and though efforts are being made to continue the ordinary life of the city the conservancy and bus services have been intermittently affected as also the trade and commerce of the city and there is a general feeling of unease. In particular the situation in the Taltola and Bowbazar areas has been particularly unsatisfactory and stringent measures, including the imposition of curfew for 24 hours at a time and even longer, have had to be taken to control those areas. The actual incidents reported to the police during the period have been 208, resulting in 21 deaths and 149 injuries. The work of maintaining law and order and the restoration of confidence has been very considerably hampered by the attempt to spread communal feeling among the Muslim and Hindu members of the armed police and the demands that have been made for the posting of pickets in the city on a communal basis.

13. It is fortunate that in West Bengal the communal troubles in Calcutta have hardly spread beyond Howrah town. In Howrah itself there has been considerable improvement since the beginning of the fortnight, and the military were withdrawn on the 4th of the month. Recently only sporadic incidents have been reported—the total number during the period being 145 resulting in the death of 7 persons. The problem of the arrest of the *goonda* elements in Howrah town has been taken up in earnest by the police and another encouraging feature has been the fact that public morale has remained high: in spite of the disturbances transport services have continued to operate and shops have remained open.

14. The only serious communal incident in the Division outside Howrah town was clash in the Angus Jute Mill's coolie lines on the 7th April when the armed police had to open fire in self-defence and killed 5 persons and injured 19.

15. In the presidency Division there has been some tension in the district of Jessore where Mr Thakur, the Scheduled Caste Congress MLA of Faridpur and a member of the Constituent Assembly, had been holding meetings of Namasudras, one of which was attended by some 10,000 persons at which Mr Thakur was given a blood *tilak*. Thanks to the efforts of the local authorities, arrangements have been made to re-establish feelings of security and neighbourliness between the Namasudras and the Muslims. The only other incident of note in the Presidency Division which might well have developed into something much more serious but fortunately did not do so was a communal riot in the district of 24-Parganas following an election brawl which resulted in nine deaths.

16. In North Bengal though the communal tension is still considerable there has been no incident of note. In the Dacca Division though incidents are reported to have been few it is obvious that the general atmosphere is not healthy.

17. In the Chittagong Division tension continues in the Noakhali district. A disquieting feature of the general situation has been the failure of the police to arrest the large number of absconders and considerable delay in the submission of charge-sheets. Stringent action is being taken to bring home to the Muslims that no further recrudescence of communal disturbances will be tolerated; the general requirements of the General Administration and the Police to achieve this end are being reviewed. The economic boycott of Hindus in the area is said to be disappearing but against this the Muslims are now reported to be demanding exorbitant rates

for their labour. The situation in Tippera generally shows improvement though the District Magistrate does report that in the Chandpur area the Hindus are still being threatened and cases of arson continue.

9. Congress Members Should Resign from Bengal
Provincial Legislatures

Letter from Benod Behari Sen to the Secretary, All India Congress Parliamentary Board, 19 April 1947
SPC, Vol. V, p. 57.

Noakhali

Dear Sir,

I beg to forward herewith a copy of the resolutions adopted in a meeting of the Noakhali District Congress Committee held on 18-4-47.

Yours faithfully,
Benod Behari Sen

The Secretary
All India Congress Parliamentary Board
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Noakhali

RESOLUTION NO. I

Whereas the present Muslim League administration in Bengal is being carried on with the deliberate object of carrying out the Muslim League programme of direct action and, thereby, strengthening the fight for Pakistan at the cost of the lives and properties of the minority communities and the honour of the womenfolk, this meeting expresses its want of confidence in the present Ministry.

In this state of things, the Noakhali District Congress Committee urges upon the Congress authorities to ask the Congress members of the Bengal Provincial Legislatures to resign forthwith therefrom and to chalk out a definite programme of action against the present administration for its overthrow.

RESOLUTION NO. II

This committee is definitely of opinion that the Governor of Bengal has lamentably failed in the discharge of his special responsibilities for the protection of the minorities and as such this committee urges on the Governor-General and the members of the Interim Government to intervene in the affairs of the Bengal Provincial Government.



10. Demands for the Removal of Punjabi Muslim Policemen

Letter from Asstt. Secretary, Noakhali Rescue, Relief and Rehabilitation Committee to Vallabhbhai Patel, 21 April 1947

SPC, Vol. V, pp. 58–9.

Calcutta

Dear Sir,

As directed by the committee I am sending to you copy of a joint statement issued by Mr N.C. Chatterjee, M.A., Bar-at-Law, president, Provincial Hindu Mahasabha, and Mr K.N. Dalal, president, Noakhali Rescue, Relief and Rehabilitation Committee, regarding the present situation in the district of Noakhali after making an extensive tour in the affected areas, for your information.

Yours faithfully,
Asstt. Secretary
Noakhali Rescue, Relief and
Rehabilitation Committee

ENCLOSURE

RESOLUTION OF THE COMMITTEE ADOPTED ON 18 APRIL 1947

The gruesome acts of rape and molestations of women and other bestial barbarities committed by the Calcutta policemen newly imported from the Punjab, have forced even the most peace-loving citizen towards a point of desperation. The animal behaviours of these uniformed goondas as manifested at Jugipara Lane and 100 Harrison Road have only justified the public apprehensions that were expressed at their motivated importation from the Punjab. The committee therefore demand that an enquiry be immediately made jointly by the non-communal officials and eminent non-officials of the aggrieved community into these dastardly acts and to make arrangements for meting out exemplary punishments to the culprits. The committee further demand that these unwanted recruits from the Punjab be forthwith removed from service and from the province.

As the committee have found that the presence of the newly recruited Punjabi Muslim sepoy in the Hindu areas creates a sense of terror rather than of security, they demand that the rate-payers' money must not be wasted on the recruitment of these men. The committee therefore record their emphatic protest against the ominous advertisements that are being issued by the Commissioner of Police for recruitment of the Punjabi Muslims as sepoy in the Calcutta Armed Forces. The committee request His Excellency the Governor of Bengal to immediately intervene in this matter and to publicly declare that these unwanted incumbents would be forthwith removed and their further recruitment stopped. The committee in the last place must reiterate that the communal Ministry of Bengal by importing these beastly elements in Calcutta's police force have once more proved that they have no right to remain in charge of administration of the province as a whole.

Resolved further that the views herein expressed be intimated to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal, the Chief Minister of Bengal, His Excellency the Governor-General of India and to the Vice-President and the Home Minister of the Government of India.

11. Reveal Plan of Action

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Benod Behari Sen, 23 April 1947
SPC, Vol. V, p. 58.

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter dated 19th instant along with a copy of the resolutions of your committee. I do not know whether your committee is serious and whether they have weighed the consequences of any action that may be taken in order to give effect to these resolutions. I do not think that what has happened in Noakhali during recent months would have happened at all if your committee had the strength of putting into effect such resolutions. It is, therefore, hard for me to believe that there is any seriousness in this affair. If these resolutions mean a mere bluff it is sure to injure the cause of the people of Noakhali. If the committee means business I would like to know the plan of action that is contemplated.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Benod Behari Sen
Secretary, Noakhali District Congress Committee Noakhali (Bengal)

12. 'Hindu Sabha Hartal Has No Justification'

Extracts from a Report from *Dawn*, 24 April 1947.

Calcutta, Wednesday

'This hartal has clearly been called for a political purpose just to pretend before a credulous public that the present Government are oppressing the Hindus and, therefore, there is no other alternative but the partition of Bengal,' observed Mr H.S. Suhrawardy in a statement in the Bengal Legislative Assembly today.

The hartal was called today by the Bengal provincial Hindu Mahasabha in many parts of Calcutta as a protest against alleged police excesses.

The Bengal Legislative Assembly met today with empty opposition benches. The only opposition member present in the house was Mr Amar Krishna Ghosh, General Secretary of the Congress Assembly party.

'It will not wash. In fact this present hartal has shown how very baseless are such arguments advanced by the protagonists of the Hindu Mahasabha and how attempts are made to take political advantage of the slightest incident and even to create grievances for purposes of political propaganda.

'Can anyone doubt that a hartal called under present conditions was fraught with grave possibilities of disturbance and lawlessness, and yet a political organization gaily enters the field and calls upon all persons to observe a hartal with the fullest knowledge that it will be accompanied by violence and intimidation....'



13. Grant of Additional Legal Powers to the Armed Forces

Letter from Additional Secretary, Government of Bengal, Home Department, to Secretary, Government of India, Defence Department (Army Branch), 28 April 1947

Home Poll., File No. 184/47, West Bengal State Archives.

Calcutta

Sir,

I have the honour to address you on the subject of the grant of additional legal powers to the armed forces now operating in Bengal in aid of the civil power.

2. Experience of the disturbances that have been a feature of conditions in Calcutta in recent months and which are now present in the city has shown that if the full benefit of the services of the troops, operating in aid of the civil power, is to be obtained it is essential that certain additional legal powers, as detailed below, should be made available by ordinance to them in those areas of the Province declared by the Province Government under the provisions of the proposed Ordinance to in a disturbed state:

(a) Power to arrest for breaches of a curfew order:

It is not always possible for a military patrol to be accompanied by a police officer and a magistrate and, as the law stands at present, it is not legal for a military patrol to arrest a person found on the streets for the mere breach of a curfew order, whether promulgated under section 144, CrPC or under section 9D of the Bengal Special Powers Ordinance, 1946 as enacted and continued in operation by Bengal Act I of 1947 (copy enclosed). On the other hand it is clearly essential that a curfew order, once promulgated, should not be flouted with impunity in the areas dominated by the troops. To remedy this defect, it is proposed that military personnel of the rank of NCO and above should be given the power to order the troops under their command to arrest without warrant and produce as soon as possible after arrest before a police officer anybody found committing a breach of a curfew order.

(b) Power to order the search of persons in accordance with the provisions of section 17A of the Bengal Special Powers Ordinance, 1946 as enacted and continued in operation by Bengal Act I of 1947. The power under this section was taken by this Government to enable the police to meet the menace of the dagger and the acid bomb. It is not always possible for a police officer to be present with every military formation but searches of the kind provided for by this section have been proved to be of such value that it is considered essential that Viceroy's Commissioned Officers and King's Commissioned Officers should have the power to order the troops under their command to carry out searches of the nature provided for by this section in the absence of the police.

(c) Power to enter a house and search therein in order to arrest without warrant persons who have committed or have attempted to commit in their view from such house the following offences—307 IPC (attempt to murder), 324 IPC (voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means), 325 IPC (voluntarily causing grievous hurt), 326 IPC (voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means), 332 IPC (voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from his duty), 333 IPC (voluntarily causing grievous hurt to deter public servant from his duty) and arrest and produce

such persons as soon as possible as after arrest before a police officer. As the law stands at present, it is not possible for a military patrol, unaccompanied by a police officer or a magistrate, to enter a house and search therein and arrest without warrant a person detected firing at, bombing or otherwise attacking within the view of the military patrol persons in the street, whether military or otherwise. In the present conditions and in view of the fact that it is not always possible for every military formation to be accompanied by a police officer or a magistrate, it is considered essential that military personnel of the rank of N.C.O. and above should have the power to order military detachments under their command to enter a house for the purpose of searching and arresting a person seen to have committed one or other of the above mentioned offences, without suffering the delay involved in waiting for the arrival of the police.

I am now to request that the Government of India will, at a very early date, favourably consider the above proposals, which have been discussed with and have the concurrence of the Headquarters, Bengal and Assam Area, and move the Governor-General to promulgate, under section 72 as set out in the 9th Schedule to the Government of India Act, 1935 an Ordinance to give effect to these proposals.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient servant

P.D. Martyn

Additional Secretary to the Government of Bengal

14. Report on the Indian Press

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on the Press for the Second Half of April 1947,
28 April 1947

Home Poll, File No. 38/1947, West Bengal State Archives.

The communal situation in Calcutta continues to usurp the largest measure of attention. The joint appeal issued by Mahatma Gandhi and Mr Jinnah, though supported by almost all sections of the press, has different reactions. The Hindu press finds nothing new in the appeal so far as Mahatma Gandhi is concerned and dwells upon the fact that he has all along been an apostle of Hindu-Muslim amity. As regards Mr Jinnah's part in the appeal, some of the Hindu papers consider it to be of outstanding importance, *Ananda Bazar Patrika* commenting as follows, 'It has been made clear by the statement that there is no political object behind lawless acts and acts of coercion done in any part of the country. These are only organized or individual acts of goondaism. The value of Mr Jinnah's signature will be proved by the extent to which it influences Mr Suhrawardy's administration.' Other Hindu papers such as **Swaraj** observe, 'Mr Jinnah and his colleagues have characterized brutal violence in the attacks on another community as the war of liberation of the Muslim nation. After encouraging indirectly anti-social activities in this way it is sheer hypocrisy to issue the message of peace in a public statement.' **Azad** is inclined to think that this appeal 'will not bring about lasting peace and prosperity in the country' for 'undivided India has to-day proved to be a thorn in the path of peace and independence.' The statement issued by the Hon'ble the Chief Minister endorsing Gandhi-Jinnah appeal attracts high praise from **Statesman** but the Hindu press

persists in bringing forward the charge of insincerity against it and expresses the opinion that 'Mr Suhrawardy's appeal and requests are bound to fail.'

In connexion with the economic situation, the police finds themselves between two fires. On the one hand there is the Muslim Press directing its volleys against the Hindu police coming out with tales of alleged atrocities committed by them on the other hand the Hindu press keeps up an almost unceasing fire at the armed Punjabi Police. In all this welter and confusion of stories, a house in Harrison Road comes into very great prominence. Alleged excesses committed on the inmates of this house by some members of the Punjabi armed police call forth a series of extremely better articles from a number of Hindu newspapers inveighing very strongly against the callousness of Government and inviting the Hindus to prepare for their own defence. The Muslim section of the Press generally regards the story of 100, Harrison Road as a 'fantastic fabrication' maliciously concocted with a definite ulterior motive.

Certain press instructions including pre-censorship of news and comments relating to police excesses, warmly supported by the Muslim section of the Press, are characterized by the Hindu papers as gagging and evoke much hostile criticism. The adjournment motions moved in the legislature in this connexion come in for consideration notice, the statements made by the Hon'ble the Chief Minister and other Government spokesmen carrying little conviction to the Hindu papers which generally remain inflexible in their attitude.

Minor interest is attached to some other questions. The absence of His Excellency the Governor from the Governors' Conference comes to be the subject of some unfavourable comment. 'Is not his absence shrouded in mystery,' asks **Yugantar**. **Swaraj** does not know 'from what illness he is suffering,' but has no doubt that 'it had done him a friendly service.' The resolutions passed by the Bengal Provincial Congress demanding removal of the Punjabi police and of the present Ministry and formation of regional ministries get a large measure of support from the Hindu session of the Press. The resignation of Lord Pethick Lawrence before the transfer of power was complete is, according to **Matribhumi**, 'not without meaning'. In the opinion of Azad, 'people of India should remember him as one who did not hesitate to resort to falsehood in order to obtain the support of a party and was also guilty of breach of trust.' The Bengal Congress Assembly Party Memorandum to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru finds favourable notice from the Hindu Press—which speaks of corruption, inefficiency and waste of public money under the League Ministry in Bengal. The Muslim Press generally lends strong support to the State Acquisition and Tenancy Bill. The Hindu Press, however, is inclined to find in it a proof of the communal mentality of the Ministry and doubts that it is really meant for the benefit of the masses. It further makes the point that the present transitional period is hardly suitable for the introduction and passage of a controversial bill of this nature.

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15. Communal Disturbances in Calcutta

Telegram from A.K. Ghosh and Bejoysingh Nahar to Louis Mountbatten, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Kiranshankar Roy, Surendramohan Ghosh, 29 April 1947

SPC, Vol. V, p. 60.

COMMUNAL TROUBLES IN CALCUTTA CONTINUE UNABATED. SITUATION IN THE MOFUSSIL ALSO FAST DETERIORATING. PRESENCE OF CONGRESS MEMBERS OF BENGAL LEGISLATURE ESSENTIAL IN THEIR

CONSTITUENCIES. MANY MEMBERS ABSENT FOR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. FAR-REACHING BILLS OF HIGHLY COMMUNAL AND CONTROVERSIAL NATURE BEING RUSHED THROUGH THE LEGISLATURES WITHOUT PROPER NOTICE AND ADEQUATE CONSIDERATION. SITUATION WILL GROW WORSE IF THESE BILLS BE TAKEN UP NOW. CONGRESS MEMBERS OF THE BENGAL ASSEMBLY AND COUNCIL SOLICIT YOUR EXCELLENCIES IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION FOR PROROGUING THE HOUSES.

A.K. GHOSH

GENERAL SECRETARY CONGRESS ASSEMBLY PARTY

BEJOYSINGH NAHAR

SECRETARY BENGAL CONGRESS COUNCIL PARTY

16. 'Realization of Collective Fines'

Extract from a Report from *Morning News*, 1 May 1947

Home Poll, File No. 215/47, West Bengal State Archives.

The realization of collective fines in Calcutta, notified from time to time, has commenced from April 17, 1947. Persons liable may pay their fines in cash to the authorized officers at the collection centres (local thanas) between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on the dates specified in the demand notices.

In the case of fine of Rs 50 and above, challans have been issued with the demand notices. The payees may also credit the amount at the Treasuries at Alipore and Calcutta Collectorate.

Collective fines may also be paid at the Collective Fines Office at Anderson House (top floor), Alipore, between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on open days. Failure to pay as in the notice of demand will be followed by issue of Warrant for the levy of the fine.

If any person liable for a portion of the collective fine wishes to file any objection, he may apply in the special form obtainable at the Collective Fines Office, Anderson House, (top floor), Alipore. Such objection will not be considered unless it is accompanied by a copy of the challan or of the receipt, showing payment of the fine, together with any other evidence in support of the grounds of objection. The petition of the objection has to be addressed to the Special Officer, Home (Political) Department, at the above address. If the objection is allowed the fine paid will be refunded in accordance with the orders passed.

17. Report on Bengal Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bengal for the Second Half of April 1947, 3 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.

I—Political

The latest developments in the general politico-communal situation in Calcutta have continued to give cause for the greatest unease and the general picture of the situation in the Province as a whole, taking into consideration the political forces at work and the declared intentions of political leaders, must be regarded with disquiet.

2. In Calcutta the fortunately sporadic but nevertheless determined employment of bombs, revolvers and acid has become a daily feature of events—a feature which must be accepted as

marking a very definite stage in the campaign that may be expected to be waged in the months to come for political recognition and freedom.

3. In spite of impassioned appeals for unity and peace the closing of the ranks of the various political parties has been more and more emphasized and threats of dissociation with the present regime have been more and more frequently heard while attacks on Government and its servants have become more violent. Present tendencies, in fact, continue to emphasize very clearly indeed the complete helplessness of the leaders of all political parties to control the members of the various communities in the situation in which the Province finds itself at present, while the openly expressed inability of members of the various communities to 'get together' to bring about any sort of settlement in the city emphasizes the fundamental unwillingness and inability to co-operate and the increase of communal discord.

4. Needless to say the Hindu section of the community, bitterly hostile as they are to the present regime, has taken the fullest political advantage of the present troubles in their campaign for the achievement of partition and their attempt to bring about the downfall of the present system. The partition movement, in fact, referred to as a likely major development in recent reports, has taken hold of the imagination of large sections of the Hindu community, and present indications are that partition has been accepted as inevitable by large sections of the same community. Admittedly this view is far from unanimous and certain Hindu organizations taking their cue from Mr Sarat Bose—the Forward Bloc, the Revolutionary Socialist Party—are attempting to prevent the proposal so actively sponsored by the Mahasabha and the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. The local Muslim League organizations, too, have attempted in recent weeks to counter the agitation by several offers including that of a sovereign united larger Bengal, sponsored by the Chief Minister, but from information available it does not appear that to the Hindus of West Bengal and even to large sections of the Hindus of Eastern Bengal the counter proposals are likely to prove acceptable.

5. From West Bengal itself it is clear that the proposed partition continues to be the centre of attraction in the political field and the general consensus of opinion in this area is one of overwhelming support for the proposal. A number of meetings have been held, including one attended by some 1,200 persons of Bankura in support of the idea. Fortunately, though the movement is growing it has remained perfectly peaceful as yet though the proposal to raise thousands of volunteers in support of the scheme, if successful, may give rise to trouble later. In the Presidency Division, too, despite the Communists and Forward Blocists, the movement is receiving support and in Dacca the subject continues to be the chief consideration in political quarters. Even in Chittagong the agitation continues to grow with signs that the Muslims are becoming reconciled to the idea. In Calcutta itself considerable publicity has been given through organized parties and a number of meetings, notably one attended by some 2,000 persons with Mr N.C. Chatterjee as President, have been held advocating the proposal.

6. In the capital, however, the main political issue of the moment has been submerged in the politico-communal incidents that have followed each other with quick succession. The highlight on the political side has undoubtedly been the *hartal* staged on the 23rd, the alleged purpose of which was to protest against police excesses in Calcutta. The CPI, TUC, Marwaris and Mahasabha interests were prominent in staging this demonstration which was utilized to stress the need for organizing Hindu defence against the alleged anti-Hindu pro-Muslim policy of the Ministry. The proposal was actively supported by the student movement notably the Forward Bloc Students' Bureau who have been for some time attempting to agitate in a

violent manner against the introduction of additional Muslim police into the city. On the day itself all the shops, daily markets, cinemas, jute presses and educational institutions in Hindu localities in the town and suburbs were completely closed. Employees of almost all the Banks and mercantile firms absented themselves from work. The attendance at Government offices was extremely small. All public conveyances except for a few trams and buses, taxis, rickshaws and carts did not ply. Attempts to bring out trams were frustrated by brick batting by miscreants. The success of the *hartal* in large quarters of the city was complete and is reported to have very seriously perturbed sections of the Muslim League. In Muslim quarters, however, trade and commerce were carried on normally, but for the absence of transport.

7. The pressing needs and problems first of the capital and then of the Province itself have almost entirely diverted attention from the all-India field of politics, though there has been a very acute realization that the future of the Province may already have been decided over their heads in favour of a partition....

II—Communal

15. In the Bengal of today political and communal matters are indistinguishable and the remarks relating to the political situation thus apply to the communal situation which must be regarded in Calcutta as in every way unsatisfactory. Apart from Calcutta itself including Howrah town, the situation in the rest of the Province though outwardly not disturbed barring a few minor incidents must yet be regarded as potentially dangerous.

16. The closing of the ranks of the political parties, the realization that with freedom within their grasp every nerve must be strained to gain advantage over political opponents and for this purpose to take advantage of if not actively to sponsor and support communal disturbances have all played their part in bringing about a deterioration in the situation in Calcutta particularly since the *hartal* of the 23rd. Statistics indicate that during the period there have been 321 incidents resulting in 42 deaths and 368 injuries. As will be apparent from the figures, the incidents themselves have only been spasmodic and have not affected large sections of the city at all though, on the other hand, the comparatively small affected area of the initial stages of the disturbances late in March has now been enlarged and at present the curfew orders cover 13 out of the 26 police-stations of the city.

17. The period has been characterized by a definite campaign against Government and its officers, particularly the armed police sponsored by the Hindu opponents of Government and met by counter-attacks against the Hindu section of the armed police by the Muslim populace. The attacks on the police—by Muslims on the Gurkhas and by Hindus on the Punjabi Muslims—have been frequent and determined—attacks which were not a feature of the August disturbances and must unquestionably be ascribed to political causes. An ominous feature has been the increasing use of firearms and acid—by the members of different communities on each other and on the police. Large scale searches have resulted in acid, ammunition and weapons of various kinds being discovered both in *bustees* as well as in the houses of respectable persons. Stringent measures have been taken to localise the disturbances and arrest their course. Following the incidents referred to above 1,299 arrests have been made. The imposition of a curfew has been found to be most effective in controlling the situation during the night and this weapon has in consequence been freely used and orders for the imposition of curfew for periods up to forty-eight hours (leaving short intervals for the obtaining of food) have been made where necessary. Large-scale searches have been carried out with a view to the rounding

up of known bad characters, it being realized, however, that much of the present disorder has a political motive and failing an unequivocal determination by political persons of all grades to call a halt a cessation of the present troubles is unlikely. The isolation of certain parts of the city to members of the opposite community is more marked than ever with consequent disastrous effects on trade, commerce and life generally. Corporation services have been working with difficulty and business is hampered and at a standstill in many areas. The breakdown in the morale of the Gurkha armed police following a series of attacks on the Nepalese in the town and attacks by the Muslim section on the force itself has thrown an additional strain on the rest of the force partly met by the drafting in of Bengal Police reinforcements and the greater employment of the military who are now dominating seven police-stations in the city.

18. In Howrah town considerable tension still continues and here too there has been a marked tendency to use firearms and acid bombs. The number of killed (12) and injured (36) during the period shows an increase of the figures of the last fortnight. Very considerable vigour has been shown in the rounding up of bad characters.

19. As regards the general situation in West Bengal apart from Howrah a number of minor incidents have been reported from the other districts of the Division except from Bankura where, however, there is mutual suspicion and distrust and Birbhum where the relations between the two communities have remained outwardly friendly. Fortunately however despite the example of Howrah town no serious situation developed elsewhere though in the Katwa subdivision of Burdwan the partition movement is reported to have given rise to a certain amount of communal tension during the annual procession of local deities. Lack of incident but general mistrust and suspicion of one community towards the other has been noticeable in the Presidency Division. Similar is the situation in the Rajshahi Division where the movement in favour of partition has tended to increase the tension. It is unfortunate that there have been some incidents in Dacca towards the end of the period resulting in the imposition of a curfew order and the defence scheme but the most recent indications are that the situation is well under control.

In Chittagong the general situation has remained unchanged. Further reports of the molestation of Hindus by Muslims have been received from the Tippera district while the absence of similar reports from Noakhali, where such incidents are known to have occurred, is considered by the Commissioner to be disquietening. The left wing of the Feni Muslim League are reported to be holding secret meetings advocating the economic boycott of the Hindus....

18. No Law and Order in Calcutta

Letter from M.N. Saha to Rajendra Prasad, 4 May 1947
R.P. Papers, F. No. 6-I/45-6-7, NAI.

Calcutta

Dear Dr Rajendra Prasad,

I have to give you a piece of very bad news. Sir Jadunath Sarkar's son, Dr Abani Nath Sarkar, was stabbed by an assassin on the footpath near the Church at Dhurmatollah—Esplanade junction at 6 p.m. when there was full daylight, and expired 36 hours later at the Medical College Hospital. Sir Jadunath felt the shock so much that he has aged considerably and his life has been shortened.

Dr Abani N. Sarkar was a brilliant student of the Calcutta University in Physics, and took his Ph.D. about 1926 in London. After that, he had operation of his tonsils, and became stone deaf. On account of this physical defect, he could not be confirmed in any job. He was for some time Reader in Physics in the Muslim University, Aligarh, and for some time served in the Meteorological Department. As he could not get any job, his father started for him a small press. He has two sons, 15 and 13. On the day of occurrence, he was returning from his press and looking for a train near the Church, when the assassin rushed from a lane, and made a 10' long cut through the lower part of his belly and ran away. His cries brought an Anglo-Indian young man called Erich, and a number of Padres who were having their Sunday Mass in the Church. They rendered whatever aid they could on the spot, and hurried him to the Calcutta Medical College. He lingered for 36 hours and then expired. His parents and relatives had time to see him. He communicated to his father, in feeble writing before his father, that his assailant looked like a college student.

While Abani was being attended to in the Medical College, a Moslem goonda was brought to the same place in a dying condition. He had stabbed a Hindu, but was caught, and was so severely beaten that he was on the point of death. In his dying declaration, he said that he had sold his life for 25 rupees. He said that there was an organization which pays 25 rupees for every Hindu murdered, and 15 rupees for every Hindu wounded. This was overheard by the Padres and the Anglo-Indian boy, and the medical attendants. They could not make out the name of the organization. Whether the statement has been recorded is not known.

Several other prominent men have been murdered. As news is now censored by the Bengal Government, it is not possible to know all names. But one which has come to our notice is Mr S. Das, an electrical engineer and grandson of the late Sarat Ch. Das, Tibetan Explorer in 1880. He with his two cousins had gone to Park Circus, to their ancestral house which they had abandoned on account of these disturbances, and while removing certain valuables were set on by 6 goondas in open daylight with flashing knives. A sergeant rushed in, but Das was fatally stabbed, and his cousins escaped with some wounds.

This may give you some picture of Calcutta. There is no law and order, people are being murdered in broad daylight. Hindus had to abandon their houses in border areas. Most of these incidents are not allowed to appear in the papers. The areas infested by the assassins are well known, but no action is being taken against them.

Thousands of telegrams are being sent to the Central Government supporting partition, as that appears to be the only solution. But I am told by a high officer in the Telegraph Department that these are being withheld by orders of the Bengal Government in exercise of their emergency powers. The Department is now under Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, and he is said to be trying hard to put communally-minded Moslem officers in key positions. So probably most of these telegrams are not reaching the Central Government.

I hope the members of the Interim Government will support the partition move, and thus save Bengal Hindus, and the city of Calcutta, from utter ruin which now faces them.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
M.N. Saha



19. Enquiries into Noakhali Riots

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten, 7 May 1947

P.N. Chopra (Ed.), *The Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, Vol. XII, pp. 78–9.

New Delhi

MY DEAR LORD MOUNTBATTEN,

I have seen reports in the Press that Suhrawardy refuses to publish the reports of officers who were appointed to make enquiries into the Noakhali disturbances. I feel that the Central Government would be interested in these reports. It is possible, however, that if a demand went from us, Suhrawardy would refuse.

The only other way we can obtain them is through HE the Governor of Bengal and I would be grateful if he could be requested to send a copy.

Yours sincerely,
VALLABHBHAI PATEL

20. Political Manoeuvrings Affecting Bengal Police Force

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten, 7 May 1947

SPC, Vol. V, pp. 72–4.

New Delhi

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

I am sending herewith a copy of the report which the Director of the Intelligence Bureau has received from the Inspector-General of Police, Bengal. You will notice that ministerial interference in the actions of the police and in internal matters like transfers, and other things is seriously affecting the morale of the police force. The Director of Intelligence of the Defence Department has, in another connection, mentioned that in the event of any large-scale disturbance in Eastern India, the Army will be presented with an increased problem owing to the state of the police forces in Bihar and not Calcutta. It seems that our problem in Bengal would not be merely Calcutta, but all over.

2. Regarding Bihar police, I have had discussions with the Bihar Premier and will be writing to you separately.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

28 April 1947

The police have continued to work satisfactorily in very trying circumstances and discipline has on the whole been good.

Morale outwardly appears to be high, but there are increasingly obvious circumstances which will inevitably tend to cause deterioration.

News of the police mutiny in Bihar was received with considerable interest but, though the events were freely discussed, there have been no apparent repercussions in Bengal. Posters

issued by the CSP urging the Bengal police to follow the example of their brethren in Bihar have been found in one district. Copies of appeals addressed 'Bharatiya Police Bahinir Kachhe' have also been traced and seized from a private house.

Government's delay in issuing final orders on pay scales continues to involve unfavourable comment.

The ever increasing communal tension amongst the populace is inevitably having an adverse effect on unity in the subordinate ranks, which is in no way mitigated by Government's frequently repeated appeals to the people to restore communal harmony, possibly because these appeals have so far been ineffective. Officers and men are perturbed by the political considerations which influence the result of police action generally and which are viewed with considerable misgiving by all ranks. In Noakhali district there is a distinct feeling that vigorous action against the aggressor community will not meet with the approval of those in power. Needless to say, steps are being taken to endeavour to counteract this feeling, but circumstances make it difficult to eradicate the justifiable impression, which is gaining ground throughout the province, that the authority of superior police officers is being undermined. Ministerial intervention in such matters as transfers within a district, disciplinary action taken by competent authority and the normal investigation of crime has strengthened this impression. The authority of superior officers has always been highly respected in the past, and the undermining of such authority is viewed with dismay and alarm by officers and men, both Muslim and Hindu. There are indications that a situation has been created in which it has become possible for persons claiming responsibility to question subordinate officers regarding the ability of their superiors. All ranks of both communities (including officers of the IP) fear the results of communal favouritism which is likely to result from ministerial intervention in domestic matters and are apprehensive that merit will count for nothing in the matter of promotion and disciplinary action in respect of alleged offences. These circumstances are having an increasingly deleterious effect on the morale of the force as a whole.

S.G. Taylor
I.G. of Police, Bengal

21. Call for Peaceful Relations between Hindus and Muslims

M.K. Gandhi's Speech at a Prayer Meeting at Sodepur, 10 May 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 446-7.

Speaking at the prayer gathering Mahatma Gandhi addressed himself to two questions that were asked of him. In view of the sourness between Hindus and Muslims that seemed to be daily growing, was it possible for the two to become friends? He answered emphatically that the enmity could not last for ever. They were brothers and must remain so in spite of temporary insanity. But perpetual feud was not an impossibility between communities as it was not between two individuals. He hoped that that would not happen, for he prophesied that in that case they would bury the two religions in India and would sell their freedom for a mess of pottage.

The second question was, could partition of Bengal be avoided in view of the rising Hindu opinion in its favour. Gandhiji recognized the force of that opinion. He was not in a position to pronounce an opinion. But he could say without fear of contradiction that if there was partition, the Muslim majority would be responsible for it, and what was more, the Muslim

Government that was in power. If he were the Chief Minister of Bengal, he would plead with his Hindu brethren to forget the past. He would say to them that he was as much a Bengali as they were. Differences in religion could not part the two. He and they spoke the same language, had inherited the same culture. All that was Bengal's was common to both, of which both could be equally proud. Bengal was Bengal. It was neither the Punjab nor Bombay nor anything else.

If the Chief Minister could possibly take up that attitude, he (the speaker) would undertake to go with him from place to place and reason with Hindu audiences and he made bold to say that there would not be a Hindu opponent left of the unity of Bengal, the unity for which Hindus and Mussalmans had fought together so valiantly and undone 'the settled fact' of so powerful a Viceroy as Lord Curzon. If he were Suhrawardy he would invite the Hindus to partition his body before they thought of partitioning Bengal. If he had that sturdy love for Bengal and Bengalis, whether Hindus or Mussalmans, that love would melt the stoniest Hindu heart. As it was, fear and suspicion had seized the Hindu mind.

He could not forget Noakhali or even Calcutta, if all he heard was true, as it was equally true of the Muslim mind in Bihar and he had not hesitated to tell the Hindus of Bihar that they should remove all suspicion and fear from the Muslim mind. He believed in the sovereign rule of the law of love which made no distinction of race, colour, caste or creed. He was glad that he had in Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah a powerful partner in the belief, which was no secret from the world.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 11-5-1947

22. Demand for Removal of Bengal Ministry

Extract from a Letter from K.C. Neogy to Vallabhbhai Patel, 11 May 1947
SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 37-9.

Simla

My dear Sardarji,

...The latest statement of [H.S.] Suhrawardy conveys a definite threat that Calcutta will be sacked and burnt in case the partition idea is favoured....

This statement of Suhrawardy's reinforces the necessity of suppression of the present Ministry before any declaration favouring partition of Bengal [is] made. From one point of view, a demand for the enforcement of Section 93 of the Government of India Act in the case of Bengal may be considered to be inconsistent with the resistance that is being offered by the Congress to the same idea as put forward by the League in the case of the North West Frontier Province. There is, however, an essential difference between the two cases. In the case of Bengal, if the British Government's attitude is to leave the decision as regards partition of the province to the free judgment of the people concerned, a partisan Government with a black record cannot be allowed to function, particularly in the face of its open threats of violence and wholesale destruction. A neutral authority must in all fairness be installed in Bengal if the expression of public opinion on the question of partition is to be free and uninfluenced by coercion and a campaign of murder and arson.

I came here on the 1st of this month in connection with the meetings of the Indian Railway Enquiry Committee, and am likely to go down to Delhi for a few days towards the end of June.

Being so far away from Calcutta and Delhi, I naturally feel very anxious about the developments that are taking place in the situation in Bengal. It is needless for me to say that all our eyes are turned towards you in the hope that you will not fail to take whatever action is possible to save Bengal and Calcutta from utter ruin and bloodshed.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
K.C. Neogy

23. Report on Bengal Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bengal for the First Half of May 1947, 17 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI.

... II. Communal.

14. Outwardly there has been an improvement in the situation during the period though the possibility of serious trouble developing anywhere, at any time, cannot be ignored. The disappointing situation in Calcutta referred to in the last report fortunately continued for only a few days longer and by the end of the first week a very definite improvement took place. Throughout the period 76 incidents were reported, resulting in 12 deaths and 63 injuries. This improvement has continued up to the time of writing. It is difficult, if not impossible, to give complete reasons for the marked decrease in the number of incidents, for it cannot be maintained that there has been any fundamental change in the mental outlook of the members of the two communities. Suspicion and distrust remain and movement and business generally are hampered by an unwillingness to enter areas of the town inhabited by the opposite community, the presence of the curfew in certain areas and a determination to return home as early as possible in the afternoon. Whatever may be the other reasons for the improvement in the situation, it is clear that one reason for the present improvement has been the very satisfactory results obtained from extensive cordoning followed by house searches and the systematic and liberal use of the powers given by the Special Powers Ordinance (now Bengal Act I of 1946) to search (in the manner known as 'frisking' in the USA) persons passing along the streets. The results from such searches have been most encouraging to the authorities: one search, for instance, resulted in the arrest of 55 persons many of whom were bad characters and the discovery of 13 knives and a big razor on the bodies of persons arrested. In these operations military co-operation was invaluable. A policy of systematic arrests following incidents has been pursued and during the period 821 persons were arrested excluding those arrested in connection with the curfew orders. As a result of the improvement it has been possible to lift the curfew in large areas of the city and to begin to withdraw the military according to a definite programme.

15. The improvement in Calcutta has not been followed by a similar improvement in Howrah where, allowing for difference of scale, the situation still cannot be regarded as satisfactory. The incidents—60 in number—have resulted in 8 deaths and 34 injuries. Features of the Howrah situation have been the increasing use of firearms and bombs, aggressiveness on the part of Hindus and attacks on the police. Fortunately, however, public morale continues to be high—shops are open and offices well attended. Searches up to date have had comparatively

poor results though the arrest of bad characters continues: the use of firearms and bombs are held to indicate the emergence of a new class of bad characters from the *bhadralog* classes. Mixed pickets have done something to remove the prejudice in Hindu circles against the Punjabi Muslim constables and on the recommendation of local Peace Committees bodies of four volunteers—two Hindus and two Muslims—have been attached to each picket at certain posts.

16. Elsewhere in the Division, despite the situation in Howrah the communal situation has been quiet. The Presidency Division has been free from any trouble despite events in Calcutta. In North Bengal, too, no incident of importance has taken place. In Dacca as a result of stringent measures promptly taken by the local authorities, the trouble referred to in the last report has not spread; it is clear that there was a marked disinclination of the general populace to prolong the disturbances. In the Chittagong Division, the situation in the Chittagong district has remained satisfactory, though the Muslim National Guards are again involved in a case of hooliganism and a police case has been started against the offenders. In Tippera the Gandhi–Jinnah appeal is reported to have been unheeded and both in this district as well as in Noakhali petty persecution of the Hindus is the order of the day—in most cases the Hindus being too terrified to go to the police and content themselves by sending exaggerated reports to the Congress. In Noakhali where the situation has been exhaustively reviewed by the Commissioner during the early part of the period the situation is reported to be by no means healthy and the harassment of the Hindu population is still widespread. Peace Committees are supposed to have been formed in the affected areas but for the most part they now appear to be defunct and, in their place, Conciliation Committees, consisting of an equal number of leading Hindus and Muslims, are proposed....

24. Troops Needed for Safeguarding Calcutta

Letter from S.P. Jain to Vallabhbhai Patel, 23 May 1947
SPC, Vol. V, pp. 60–1.

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I have the highest admiration for the manner in which you are conducting the affairs of India from the Centre at this most difficult and critical time. We all feel that it is only with your clear vision and farsighted leadership that India can hope to steer through the difficult present.

I was at Delhi last week but I did not disturb you. I knew that you would be extremely busy. We are all anxious that the stand you have taken should be maintained as in that alone we find any gleam of hope for the future.

Calcutta is passing through anxious times. There is genuine apprehension that Muslims will attempt destruction of property on a vast scale. The policy and actions of the Ministry only aggravate the disconcerting and panicky feeling. Even at this most critical time, we find Bengal devoid of clear leadership. Unfortunate confusion is created by the existence of many leaders each ploughing his lonely furrows. It is imperative that the peace and security of the citizens should be guaranteed. It will be very desirable to keep sufficient troops near at hand in Calcutta to meet any emergency. You will no doubt recollect that the report that the Central Government would send necessary troops to Assam in the event of serious developments had a sobering effect on the Muslim agitators. I wish the report that two brigades

have come to Calcutta [was] true. We are confident that this matter will receive your serious consideration.

With regards and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
S.P. Jain

25. Measures Proposed to Prevent Trouble in Calcutta

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to S.P. Jain, 1 June 1947
SPC, Vol. V, pp. 61–2.

New Delhi

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of 23 May 1947, and I thank you for the appreciation of the work that we have been doing.

We are aware of the apprehension felt by the non-Muslim population in Calcutta by the possible attempts at destruction of property by the Muslims, and we have taken all precautions to prevent such a catastrophe. You must have seen the broadcast of the Governor of Bengal who has spoken for the first time about his preparedness to meet with the situation and has assured the people that he will do his best to prevent destruction and vandalism. Enough force has been sent to Calcutta and there is complete preparation to meet with any situation that may arise.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

26. Report on Bengal Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bengal for the Second Half of May 1947,
4 June 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI.

...II—COMMUNAL

14. The intense apprehension and unease in the political field has had its inevitable repercussions on the communal situation in Calcutta and though, fortunately, in the rest of the Province (apart from Howrah town), the communal situation has not been marked by any outward manifestations of communal hatred and dislike, in Calcutta the situation has taken a very definite turn for the worst. In the last report it was found difficult to ascribe any convincing reasons for the improvement that occurred during that period; this fortnight it is equally difficult to ascribe particularly convincing reasons for the deterioration that has taken place, beyond linking the deterioration with the intense political discussions that have taken place and the resulting apprehension that is undoubtedly present in all quarters as a result of the announcement to be made early in June. A further factor which cannot be ignored is the undoubted fact that, in Muslim circles, there is a very definite feeling that the continuance, if not intensification, of the present incidents is due to the unwillingness of the Mahasabha and other political parties to see peace restored in the city—for with peace one of the main arguments in favour of partition and

the dissolution of the present Ministry would go. It is certain, too, that both parties apprehend trouble and, in fact, on the 25th the *Imams* of certain mosques warned the Muslims to keep themselves ready to defend themselves against the attacks which the Hindus would launch on 2nd June or as soon as His Excellency the Viceroy announces that the partition of Bengal will not be granted. It is perhaps significant in this connection that, following the house-search of a leading Mahasabha supporter, bombs and acid were discovered in his residence.

The degeneration in the Calcutta situation which has marked the whole period is reflected in the statistics for the period. Two hundred and seventy-eight incidents have been reported resulting in 37 deaths and 304 injuries. Police and military action has been fully maintained and as a result of the degeneration the military have had to be brought back in strength into the city and now dominate seven police-stations. House-searches and the 'frisking' of wayfarers in selected areas continue. The policy of swift arrests in the vicinity of incidents continues and during the period (sic) 1,806 persons were arrested, in addition to those arrested for breaches of the curfew orders. Curfew orders, imposed for extensive periods as the situation demands, have also continued to be one of the main weapons employed to bring the situation under control. The use of firearms and acid by members of the public continues to be a feature of the Calcutta situation and a number of serious incidents have occurred involving explosives and the use of guns by the public. The use of empty houses by miscreants as shelters from which to open fire has become a feature of the situation. A development which may have serious implications should still more serious trouble develop in June has been the switch-over of the trouble from the suburbs to the centre of the city notably in the police-stations of Taltolla, Bowbazar and Jorasanko.

15. In Howrah, on the other hand, there has been some improvement in the situation mirrored in the statistics of the period: the number of incidents being 39, the number of dead 7 and the number of injured 19. Public morale continues to remain high and following the improvement in the situation curfew orders have been considerably relaxed. Proposals are under consideration to relax them even further in the near future. The total number of arrests following incidents have been 181 and very considerable use has been made of the powers to cordon and search residential houses as well to 'frisk' pedestrians. On 22nd May, for instance, over 1,500 persons were searched in the streets under these powers though on this occasion as well as on other occasions without result. Disheartening though this lack of result has been, it is yet felt that the use of these powers has had a considerable deterrent effect on bad characters and has prevented them from moving about with knives and other weapons as freely as they would otherwise have done. The results of house-searches have been rather more successful notably on the 25th when a live bomb, two country made guns, acid and other weapons were recovered following a house-search, but on the whole, here too, searches have been notably less conducive of result than those in Calcutta where surprisingly effective action has been taken.

16. Fortunately communal incidents have been almost entirely absent elsewhere in the Province.

The partition movement has been responsible for some deterioration in communal relations in the district of Burdwan and tension in Bankura and Birbhum is also reported. The only overt act, however, took place in Midnapore where the relations between the Bihari Muslim refugees at Salbani and the local inhabitants, mostly Scheduled Caste Hindus, have been strained for some time as a result of petty incidents. The situation recently came to a head

when the Garrison Engineer was attacked following the search of the camp for stolen furniture belonging to the M.E.S. Soon after the refugees set fire to three small villages in the vicinity of the camp. The villagers were at first restrained by local Congress leaders but eventually made a mass attack on the camp and set fire to it: the police were forced to open fire, nine persons being killed. Order has now been restored but there is considerable apprehension of serious trouble in the future....

27. Alternate Path to Hindu-Muslim Unity

Letter from Abhay Charan De to J.B. Kripalani, President, AICC, 17 June 1947
AICC Papers, File No. C-8/1946, NMML.

Calcutta

Dear Sir,

Ghose read with great care your speeches in the last meeting of the AICC at New Delhi and the following portion of your speech is of special interest to us. You have said among other things—‘Even Mahatma Gandhi has not yet found a way of tackling the problem on a mass scale. When he taught non-violent non-cooperation, he had shown a definite method which we could *at least mechanically follow*. Today he himself is groping in the dark. His efforts in Noakhali... Mahatma Gandhi is saying that he is solving the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity for the whole of India in Bihar. It might be: but it is difficult to see how that is being done. There is no definite steps as in non-violent non-cooperation that led to this desired goal. That is why I am not with him today. Though Mahatma Gandhi could enunciate policies, that had in the main ... carried out by others who were not converted to his way of thinking.’

Mahatma Gandhi and yourself along with your many co-workers, are undoubtedly all very great souls and in comparison to that I am a street-fellow without any asset worth mentioning, but you may know the maxim that even from the very lowest creature, the greatest man can learn something as from the medicinal qualities of an insignificant herb great relief is sometimes obtained.

In that broad view if you kindly read my expressions given below, I think you may derive some great hint which can solve the very great problem you are all now confronted with?

I had before this, several times made attempt to see Mahatma Gandhi but in most cases I was not replied even to my requests and in some cases Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur replied that Mahatma Gandhi was very busily engaged and I can seek for another time to see him and so forth. The same reply was received even from Pandit Jawaharlal’s secretary and I don’t know what reply I can expect from your goodself.

Any way it is my duty to tell you something which is absolutely right and I pray to God that my attempt with you, may not be a failure.

The thing is that unless a man is a liberated soul, he is polluted with the following discrepancies, however great he may be. The discrepancies are as follows:

- 1) One is apt to commit mistake.
- 2) One is apt to accept the untruth as truth.
- 3) One is apt to deceive others in course of ordinary dealings.
- 4) One is apt to visualize or experience everything imperfectly, due to the imperfect senses.

But one who is a liberated soul is always immune from the above deficiencies. It is always right therefore to follow the way of thinking by persons who are transcendental to all the above mentioned defects. I can dare say, *that Mahatma Gandhi, however great he may be, is not yet a liberated soul* like great sages as Narada, Vyasa or like the Personality of Godhead Sree Krishna. It is therefore quite easy to understand that all his way of thinking is somehow or other polluted with the above mentioned four kinds of deficiencies.

An imperfect non-liberated soul, however great he may be in the estimation of many other non-liberated or conditioned souls, is always apt to commit the above four principles. As such all the non-standard and manufactured way of thinking may serve for the time being or for a certain period but it is not possible to drag any such time-serving method or imperfect way for all the time to come. I can dare say also therefore that Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent non-cooperation might have been effective means to a certain end but that is not a perfect way to serve for all the time.

The perfect way is enunciated in the 'Bhagwat Geeta', that is enunciated by the Personality of Godhead. If you believe therefore in the ways of 'Bhagwat Geeta' and I think you must believe so as you profess to be a Hindu, you can take up the ways of 'Bhagwat Geeta' for solution of all your problems. You may induce at the same time Mahatma Gandhi or Pandit Jawaharlal (if possible) to take up this way of thinking without any unnecessary and dogmatic interpretations.

The ways of 'Bhagwat Geeta' can solve the question of Hindu-Muslim unity in a very simple and decent way. You will not then have to grope in the dark. The light is there in the most practical way but if you close eyes you cannot see to it. What all require to do is that we must first of all learn the way ourselves from the right authority and then put it into action for others. That is a privilege for one who is born in the land of 'Bharatmata' but unfortunately we look to outsiders more than to our own great men. *The way of 'Bhagwat Geeta' is true for all the times, all the places and for all the peoples. We are prepared to prove this fact by all means and we can demonstrate the way in the most practical manner with immediate good results.*

The ways of 'Bhagwat Geeta' will not only therefore prove effective in the matter of Hindu-Muslim unity but also it can help you and Mahatma Gandhi for a world unity in the most perfect way inconceivable by any human brain.

We wish that Mahatma Gandhi may kindly take up the way of thinking as enunciated in the 'Bhagwat Geeta' without giving much importance to his own, and preach the same for the benefit of one and all. If he does so, after knowing the same himself, many people in the world, what to speak of the Indian people, will follow him for a great achievement.

If you are therefore in right earnest to know the way as it is and in the practical way or for all practical purposes, then myself and a band of workers can render you our humble services in this connection without any obligation on your part. Awaiting your early reply with interest.

Yours faithfully,
Abhay Charan De



B. BIHAR

1. Hindus Should Be Self-righteous

Extracts from M.K. Gandhi's Bihar Tour Diary
Harijan, 23 March 1947.

5-3-'47

As this was Gandhiji's first visit to Bihar after an interval of seven years there was a huge gathering to greet him at the prayer meeting on the famous *maidan* of Patna.... He then referred to the mission which had brought him to Bihar, the occasion being Dr Syed Mahmud's letter sent through his private secretary. He had flattered himself with the belief that it will be unnecessary for him to visit what he affectionately described as 'his Bihar' by right of service. But Dr Mahmud's letter led him to think that all was not as well as it should be. He knew that what the Hindus of Bihar had done towards their brethren, the Muslims, was infinitely worse than what Noakhali had done. He had hoped that they had done or were doing all the reparations that were possible and that was in magnitude as great as the crime. That meant that if there was real repentance, they should prove the truth of the great saying, 'The greater the sinner, the greater the sin.' He hoped that the Bihar Hindus will not be guilty of self-righteousness by saying that the Biharis, who had forgotten in a fit of insanity that they were human beings, were drawn from the *goonda* elements for whom the Congressmen of Bihar could not be held responsible. If they adopted the attitude of self-righteousness, they would reduce the Congress to a miserable party, whereas the Congress claimed, and he had repeated the claim in London at the Round Table Conference he had attended, that of all the organizations in India the Congress was the only one organization which rightfully claimed to represent the whole of India, whether it was called French India or Portuguese India or the India of the States, because the Congress claimed by right of service to represent not only the nominal Congressmen or its sympathizers but also its enemies. Therefore, the Congress had to make itself responsible for the misdeeds of all communities and all classes. It should be its proud privilege to better and improve the moral, material and physical condition of the whole of India to entitle it to the proud claim it had made ever since its existence. As a matter of fact, it would be wrong even to say that there was not a single Congressman involved in the mad upheaval. That many Congressmen had staked their lives in order to save their Muslim friends and brethren was no answer to the charge that was justly hurled against the Bihar Hindus by indignant and injured Muslims who did not hesitate to describe the Bihar crime as having no parallel in history. If he was so minded, he would be able to show that there were to be found in history examples of human monsters having done crimes even worse than those of the Hindus of Bihar. But he did not want to be guilty of making comparisons and weigh the greatness of crimes in golden scales. On the contrary, a truly repentant man would never want to flatter himself by even thinking that he was not as bad as his predecessors. There was a legitimate place for rivalry in doing good and outdoing one's predecessors and one's own labours in the act of service. He was therefore grieved to find that there were thoughtless Hindus in all parts of India who falsely hugged the belief that Bihar had arrested the growth of lawlessness that was to be witnessed in Noakhali. He wished to remind them in forcible terms that that way of thinking and doing was the way to perdition and slavery, never to freedom and bravery. It was a cowardly thing for a man to believe that barbarity such as was exhibited could ever protect a civilization or a

religion, or defend freedom. He was able from recent first-hand knowledge to say that where there was cowardice on the one hand there was cruelty on the other. The way, therefore, to take reprisals upon Noakhali was to learn how not to copy the barbarous deeds such as Noakhali had proved itself capable of but to return barbarism by manliness which consisted in daring to die without a thought of retaliation and without in any way compromising one's honour. He warned the audience and through them the whole of India that if they really wished to see India independent in every sense of the term, they must not imitate barbarous methods. Those who resorted to such methods would find that they were retarding the day of India's deliverance.

6-3-'47

Unlike the previous evening, Gandhiji walked tonight to the prayer ground in perfect peace through a passage lined by lady volunteers. The crowd had also become orderly. Gandhiji began his post-prayer address by complimenting the audience as well as Bari Saheb, the President of the Provincial Congress Committee, and his comrades for the orderliness which had been successfully maintained during the evening. While the *Ramadhun* was being sung there were some beats out of time. His advice was that they should practice more until both the tune and the time were in perfect unison.

A note had been handed to him reminding him that the *Holi* was on the following day and people would like to hear his opinion to how it ought to be celebrated. Gandhiji began by saying that he had no doubt in his mind that a religious ceremony like the *Holi* should never be marked by wild revelry, but by a disciplined effort to put oneself in communion with God.

There was a time, he continued, when the Hindus and the Musalmans lived side by side as peaceful neighbours. If things had today come to such a pass that they could not look upon one another as friends, let them at least not behave as enemies. There was fear among the Musalmans that the occasion of the *Holi* might be marked by renewed attacks upon them. It was surprising that he was hearing from them what he had heard from the Hindus in Noakhali and Tipperah and he felt ashamed to have to listen to the same tales in Patna as in Noakhali. He would, therefore, venture to say to his Muslim brothers in Bihar what he had said to the Hindus in Noakhali, namely, that they should shed all fear of man and trust God; but he knew that it was a counsel of perfection.

Cries of *Vande Mataram*, *Jai Bharat* or *Jai Hind* frightened the Musalmans today. Were the shouts of *Bharat Ki Jai* going to mean *Musalman ki Kshai*? It was a matter of shame that things had been brought to such a pass. He had been meeting several Muslim League friends, who, he felt, had opened their hearts before him and asked him if the Musalmans would not really be allowed to remain in a province like Bihar. The Muslim friends who were in the Congress like Dr Syed Mahmud had also expressed their uneasiness at the present situation. This terrorization of brother by brother, if it were true, was unbearable for him. Were they really going to return one act of madness by another? In that event India could only be drowned in a sea of blood.

Gandhiji was firmly of the opinion that this could never be our fate if we were determined to have it otherwise. His hope lay more in women kind who, he had ever maintained, were the living embodiment of *ahimsa* and of self-sacrifice, without which *ahimsa* could never be a reality. Gandhiji wanted everyone to celebrate the *Holi* in such a manner that every single Muslim felt that the Hindus had not only repented for what had been done to them but had also gathered love for them to an extent which outdid their previous sentiments. If the *Holi* was

marked by this revival of the old friendly relations then indeed it would be a truly religious celebration.

There was one thing more which Gandhiji wanted to tell his audience in the hope that justice would be done wherever his voice could reach. It had been conveyed to him that there were Muslim women even now kept perforce in Hindu homes. If that were true and if, of course, such women were still living, he would expect every one of them to be restored to their homes. The miscreants should show true repentance and every Hindu should consider it his duty to impress upon them that they should repent and courageously face punishment for their misdeeds. If that were too much for them, he would at least expect the women to be restored to him or to Rajendra Babu in perfect safety.

It was not enough that the Hindus should express lip-repentance or compensate the sufferers by means of money. What was really needed was that their hearts should become pure and, in place of the hatred or indifference which was sweeping over them, love should reign so that under its glow every single Muslim man, woman and child felt perfectly secure and free to pursue his or her own religious practices without the least let or hindrance. Let us all, he prayed, make the *Holi* an occasion for the initiation of this relation between the two sister communities.

2. Reporting Communal and Political Situation in Bihar

Extract from a Letter from Hugh Dow to Louis Mountbatten, 25 March 1947
TOP, Vol. X, pp. 18–19.

2. Reactions to HMG's statement of the 20th February are still rather indeterminate in this province, where there are few politicians who have an all-India reputation, or are sufficiently capable of independent thought to deserve one. The Hindu press does not quite know how to take the Congress suggestion that the Punjab should be divided, and is also doubtful about the partition of Bengal, which seems implicit in the Congress proposal and has certainly been given an added impetus by it. I should say that local Hindu opinion is still very strongly in favour of 'Akhund Hindustan', and that those who give hesitant support to ideas of partition do so rather in the belief that it will show the complete unworkability of Pakistan than because they are prepared to contemplate the division of India into two independent states....

* * *

4. Mr Gandhi has been here since 5th March and is doing a certain amount of mild touring in the areas which suffered most from the riots.... On the whole, Gandhi's visit to Bihar seems to be doing good, and he has been downright in his condemnation of those responsible for the riots.... Undoubtedly the presence of Gandhi in Bihar is doing much to reassure local Muslims, who feel that they cannot be subjected to further mass attacks while he is here. But I do not think that either Gandhi himself or the general body of Muslims feel that there has been anything like the change of heart in the Hindus that his discourses lay insistence on.



3. Gandhi Calls for Donations for Muslim Victims

Extracts from M.K. Gandhi's Bihar Tour Diary

Harijan, 30 March 1947.

8-3-'47

Gandhiji said at the prayer meeting that he hoped the audience would forgive him for speaking always and exclusively on the theme which had brought him to Bihar. It had become his duty to listen to the tale of woe that the Muslim sufferers unfolded before him from day to day. One of them had come to him and complained that, even so recently as two days ago, things were pilfered from Muslim houses. If such was the case, it was most unfortunate and if it was at all general, it betrayed a lack of the spirit of repentance without which there was no possibility of concord between the two communities in Bihar, indeed in the whole of India.

The speaker, therefore, expressed his surprise that he had received a telegram warning him that he must not condemn the Hindus in Bihar, for, what they had done was purely from a sense of duty. He had no hesitation in saying that the writer did no good to India or to Hinduism by issuing the warning. He spoke as a Hindu having a living faith in his own religion and he claimed to be a better Hindu for claiming to be good Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew even as he was a Hindu. He invited everyone of his audience to feel likewise. And as such, he would forfeit his claim to be a Hindu if he bolstered up the wrong-doing of fellow Hindus or any other fellow being.

He claimed to do them a service by opening their eyes to their wrong-doing. They must not be carried away by the mischief, for instance, which was being done in the Punjab. If they were qualifying themselves as free citizens of India become free, they must not resort to wrong-doing on hearing of the wrongs perpetrated in other parts of India or anywhere else. Their and his duty was to imitate and assimilate whatever was good, no matter where found.

Now that he had been four days among them, he ventured to draw their attention to the duty they owed to draw their attention to the distressed Muslims, namely, that they should pay whatever they could toward the relief of the sufferers. He, therefore, invited them to give whatever they could towards that cause by way of a token of repentance. It was unfortunate that he had to remind them of the obvious thing. Many Hindu donors sent him donation for the sufferers in Noakhali, which he thought amounted to nearly three lakhs of rupees. Having received the remainder, he hoped that they would come forth with handsome donations. Naturally, every pie spent would be accounted for. They should not deceive themselves into the belief that now that they had a representative Government, they would do everything in the way of finances.

The more democratic a Government, the more it laboured under disadvantage in making use of public funds. Therefore, in a well-ordered society, the legitimate limitations which Government suffered from were only crossed by wise public donations.

10-3-'43 [*sic*]

....Gandhiji then referred to a certain letter he had received from a very frank and honest friend. The letter had reminded him that the efforts for religious toleration that he had been making were all in vain for, after all, the quarrel between the Hindus and the Musalmans was not on account of religious differences but was essentially political in origin; religion had only been made to serve as a label for political distinctions. The friend had expressed the opinion that it

was a tussle between United India on the one hand and India Divided on the other. Gandhiji confessed that he did not yet know what the full meaning of dividing India really was. But what he wanted to impress upon the audience was that supposing it were only a so-called political struggle, did it mean that all rules of decency and morals should be thrown to the winds? When human conflicts are divorced from ethical considerations, the road can only lead to the use of the atom bomb where every trace of humanity was held completely in abeyance. If there were honest differences among the people of India, should it then mean that the forty crores should descend to the level of beasts, slaughter men, women and children, innocent and guilty alike, without the least compunction? Could they not agree to settle their differences decently and in a comradely spirit? If they failed, only slavery of an unredeemable type could await them at the end of the road.

At this stage the audience near the dias became rather noisy and Gandhiji had to cut short his speech. Unlike other days he stayed on for the collection for the Muslim sufferers. He made a fervent appeal to the audience to untie their purse strings generously and contribute all that they possibly could towards the fund. Referring to the question whether the Muslims had contributed similarly for relief in Noakhali, Gandhiji said that it was indeed true that little had come to him from that quarter. But the reason, he believed, had been that he was now looked upon as enemy No. 1 rather than friend by the majority of the Muslim community in India. Yet even in Comilla, there had been a case where some Muslim and Christian friends had contributed more than Rs 800 along with a parcel of conch-shell bangles and vermilion for distribution among the Hindu women from whom such ceremonial signs had been forcibly removed during the disturbances....

12-3-'47

Gandhiji held his prayer by the side of the *Mangles Talao* in Patna city this evening. On his way, he had visited the village of Kumrahar where a prosperous Muslim family had been ruined by wholesale plunder. All books, furniture and other belongings had been destroyed, while a neighbouring *masjid* had been stripped of its wood work and then left practically in ruins.

Gandhiji referred in the beginning of his address to the decision of the British Government to quit India. The latter were a nation with a strong sense of reality; and when they realized that it did not pay to rule, they did not hesitate to withdraw their power over a country. This had been the course of British history in the past. If the British were going, as they surely were, what should be the duty of Indians at the same time, asked Gandhiji. Were we to return blow for blow among ourselves, and thus perpetuate our slavery, only to tear up our Motherland, in the end, into bits which went by the name of Hindustan and Pakistan, Brahministan and Achhutistan? What greater madness could there be than what had taken place in Bengal and Bihar, or what was taking place in the Punjab or the Frontier Province?

Should we forget our humanity and return a blow for a blow? If some misdirected individual took it into his head to desecrate a temple or break idols, should a Hindu in return desecrate a mosque on that account? Did it any way help to protect the temple or to save the cause of Hinduism? Personally, said Gandhiji, he was as much an idol-worshipper as an idol-breaker, and he suggested that the whole of the audience, whether Hindu, Muslim or any other, were also so, whether they admitted it or not. He knew that mankind thirsted for symbolism. Were not *masjids* or churches in reality the same as *mandirs*? God resided everywhere, no less in stock or stone than in a single hair on the body of man. But men associated sacredness with particular places and things more than with others. Such sentiment was worthy of respect when

it did not mean restrictions on similar freedom for others. To every Hindu and Musalman, Gandhiji's advice was that if there was compulsion anywhere, they should gently but firmly refuse to submit to it. Personally, he himself would hug an idol and lay down his life to protect it rather than brook any restriction upon his freedom of worship.

That required courage of a higher order than was needed in violent resistance. Gandhiji then narrated the story of Badshah Khan's conversion to non-violence. The latter came from a tribe whose tradition was to return a blow for a blow, there being cases where blood feud had been handed down from sire to son. Badshah Khan himself felt that such endless reprisals only served to perpetuate the slavery of the Pathans. When he took to non-violence, he realized a kind of transformation coming over the Pathan tribes. It did not mean that every Pathan had undergone the transformation or that Badshah Khan who was endearingly called a *fakir* because he had won the heart of everybody by love and service, had himself reached the higher goal of non-violence. As far as he, the speaker, knew he (Badshah Khan) was every day nearing the goal because he realized the truth of it. It was this type of brave non-violence which Gandhiji wished the audience to imitate.

Gandhiji continued that he had come to Bihar in order to help the people in realizing the extent of the madness to which they had stooped. His object was to induce them to repent and thus undo the wrongs which had been perpetrated. The ruined houses of the Muslim family, he had just visited, had almost brought tears to his eyes. But he had steeled his heart and had come to teach the Hindu his duty towards his Muslim brother. True repentance required true courage. And Bihar, which had risen to great heights during the *satyagraha* in Champaran and which was the land over which the Buddha had roamed and taught, was surely capable once more of rising to heights from which it could radiate its effulgence over the rest of India. Only unadulterated non-violence could raise it to that status.

Gandhiji added that, in his opinion, the departure from the straight path of non-violence they had made at times in 1942 was very probably responsible for the aberration to which he had referred. He instanced also the spirit of general lawlessness which had seized then inasmuch as they dared to travel without tickets, pull chains unlawfully or in senseless vindictiveness, burnt *zamindari* crops or belongings. He was no lover of the *zamindari* system. He had often spoken against it; but he frankly confessed that he was not the enemy of the *zamindars*. He owned no enemies. The best way to bring about reform in the economic and social systems, whose evils were admittedly many, was through the royal road of self-suffering. Any departure from it only resulted in merely changing the form of the evil that was sought to be liquidated violently. Violence was incapable of destroying the evil root and branch.

Lastly, Gandhiji referred to a letter he had received from the Harijans asking him to visit their quarters and to live with them. He would have loved to do both the things; but he had to restrict himself to the mission that had brought him to Bihar. But having made himself a *bhangi* in thought and deed, he could never forget the Harijans. He was sorry to say that the latter were still suffering from any disabilities at all [*sic*] and that they did not get ready redress of their grievances....



4. Resettle Muslim and Hindu Victims

Extracts from M.K. Gandhi's Bihar Tour Diary
Harijan, 6 April 1947.

17-3-'47

The gathering at Masurhi was, according to official estimates, more than thirty thousand and, during the *Ramadhun*, a very large section of the men and women present participated in the recital, Gandhiji began by congratulating the audience on that account. Then he told them that his Bihar tour had not been, undertaken for pleasure, but on account of serious and grave reasons. He would visit those places where Muslims had suffered. His appeal to the Hindus was to show repentance by means of worthy and suitable acts.

During the mad days of November, women and children were remorselessly murdered, while men had also been done to death in such numbers as to put Noakhali in the shade, although events there had been of a sufficiently serious character. He expected the Hindus of Bihar to show true repentance and not merely shout '*Jai*' or victory in his name. He not only expected them to contribute liberally towards the relief fund but what he expected them to do more was that they should come forward and confess at least to him the wrongs that they had done. This alone could bring him true peace of mind.

Gandhiji said that he had asked for reports of events from various sources. One of them stated that the initial aggression had been from 'the side of the Musalmans. He was not at all concerned how the trouble actually started: the problem was, as the Hindus were in such overwhelming majority, how could they stoop so low as to indulge in murdering the innocents? True repentance, with the consequent reparatory action, alone could restore abiding peace between the two sister communities.

The report also accused the Government of indifference to wrongs suffered by the Hindus at the hands of the Muslims. Similar reports had also been received from Muslim quarters complaining of indifference to Muslim complaints. Gandhiji continued that he was slow to believe either report. A popular Government that was so indifferent or partial one way or the other could not exist for any length of time. The Government had already declared that they would presently appoint an impartial Commission to hear all complaints, examine the causes of the terrible disturbances and discover ways and means for avoiding repetition of the tragedy. They would also advise as to the reparation to be made to the sufferers. Let those who had sent their letters to him, he continued, be ready with their evidence to be put before the Commission. His was not the way of a judge or of a prosecutor. His was the humble role of a reformer and humanitarian. He had, therefore, to deal with known facts and invite offenders to repent for their follies....

21-3-'47

Gandhiji commenced with a reference to his visit to Garahwan village where men, women and children had been brutally done to death and asked those assembled before him to sit in mournful silence in sympathy with the deceased. He asked them to consider for themselves why innocent women and children had been killed. Was it to save any religion? No religion, Gandhiji emphasized, taught anyone to kill his neighbours. What was done was nothing but wanton destruction—he did not stop to think whether it was done from motives of self-interest or any other.

The houses which a few months ago were full of life, Gandhiji said, were now desolate and everyone knew about it. But then what was to be done next? People went to bathe in the Ganges, believing that their sins could thus be washed off. The ruins before them should remind them of the sin they had committed on helpless women and children and they should seek to expiate it by considering in what way they could redeem themselves. Gandhiji told them that they should clean the ruined houses and make them neat and habitable. They should also express to their Muslim brethren their repentance for the past occurrences and persuade them to return to their villages, telling them that then alone they would have peace of mind. It was possible that the Muslims might turn round and ask how they could go back and live in the houses where their kith and kin had been done to death. The Muslims, Gandhiji said, would be justified in saying so. But, if the guilty men or their relations could go to the Muslims with truly penitent hearts and assure them that what was past was past and would never be repeated, he was sure that even a stone heart would melt.

Amidst this mad upheaval, Gandhiji continued, there were men, like oasis in a desert, who risked the wrath of the violent mobs and saved many Muslim lives and Muslim property. Those people deserved congratulations, though they did not need any. If he did not go to them, Gandhiji said, it did not mean that he had not recognized their work. But he was in the nature of a doctor who went not to the well but to the suffering.

He had been told, Gandhiji proceeding said, that the Hindus had also suffered in the conflict. If there were any such, they too needed help and would be included in the relief.

Gandhiji mentioned that about fifty persons, who were wanted in connection with the riot cases, had surrendered the day after his arrival at Masurhi. He welcomed it and hoped that others who had, taken part in the riots would surrender to the proper authorities, making a clean breast of the crimes they had committed and taking whatever punishment might be given to them. If people had not the courage to surrender to the authorities, Gandhiji said, they could come to him or Badshah Khan or Major General Shah Nawaz with their confessions.

Lastly, Gandhiji referred to the fear entertained by the Hindus of Noakhali about preparations that were being made by the Muslims to observe Pakistan Day on the 23rd inst. A friend from Khadi Pratisthan had also come to him and explained to him that the situation in Noakhali was deteriorating. Gandhiji said that he had told that friend that he would not be persuaded to leave his post in Bihar at the present moment, for he believed that his mission, if fully successful in Bihar, would cast its effect on Bengal and perhaps on the rest of India. The Muslims of Bihar and the Hindus of Bengal should accept him as security for the safety of their life and property from the hands of the communalists. He had come here, Gandhiji said, to do or die. Therefore, there was no question of abandoning his post of duty till the Hindus and the Muslims could assure him that they did not need his services....

24-3-'47

He then said he had visited Behrawan where Hindu houses had been damaged. He said that for him the Hindus and the Muslims were like two eyes, as Sir Syed Ahmed had said. Such isolated instances ought not to diminish the heinousness of the Hindus' crime against the Muslims....

25-3-'47

At today's prayer meeting perfect silence was observed by the audience to the end. Gandhiji congratulated them for it. He told them that he had heard that the Hindus were boycotting the Muslims. If that was so, it was a bad omen. True repentance demanded true friendship in

which there could be no room for boycott. Hence, if they were truly repentant, they ought not to boycott the Muslims. He then referred to a visit of Muslim League friends who were prepared to co-operate in every way in rehabilitation and he added that without the co-operation of the League friends in Bihar there could be no friendship which depended not on the bayonet but on mutual goodwill....

Lastly, he referred to a visit from *Dome* friends, whom it was the duty of every Hindu to befriend. They, he was told, were under a double disability. They were treated as out castes by the caste Hindus and as the lowest in the hierarchy of untouchables. This was a shame which the Hindus were bound to wipe out at the earliest moment, if Hinduism was not to perish.

5. 'Bihar Riots: 16,032 Persons Accused So Far'

Dawn, 10 April 1947.

PATNA, Wednesday.—Mr Sri Krishna Sinha, Prime Minister, Bihar, in a written statement in reply to a question in the Bihar Legislative Council today disclosed that those Hindu accused persons against whom evidence was found satisfactory after investigation have been charge-sheeted to stand their trial in court.

Charge-sheets have been submitted up till now against 2,357 Hindus, against whom 'prima facie' evidence has been found on investigation. A large number of cases are still pending investigation due to the fact that the whereabouts of Muslim complainants and witnesses are not yet known and vigorous efforts are being made to trace them out in Bihar, Bengal and other places. The charges against these Hindu accused persons who have been charge-sheeted up till now comprise of murder, arson, loot and rioting.

So far 2,705 cases relating to communal trouble have been reported. The figure is likely to increase old occurrence are reported now or any fresh occurrences take place. The total number of Hindu accused persons is 16,032 up till now. This figure is also likely to increase as fresh names of accused persons come up during the course of investigation.

From information available 3,308 Hindu have been released on bail so far. The figure is subject to fluctuation.

2,719 Hindus have been detained in custody. The figure is subject to variation. The number of cases in which bail has been refused is not yet available, but it is presumed that in the cases of all these 2,729 persons' bail was refused.

Bail has been mostly allowed in bailable offences but there are instances in which bails have been granted in non-available [*sic*] offences mostly by the Sessions Court and the High Court.

In 907 cases investigation has been completed. Investigation in a large number of cases is almost complete and final forms will be submitted shortly.—API.

6. Hindus Continue Communal Fervour

Extracts from M.K. Gandhi's Bihar Tour Diary

Harijan, 13 April 1947.

28-3-'47

At the prayer meeting Gandhiji began by saying that he had passed a very full and heavy day. The day was begun with a long meeting with the members of the local Muslim League at the

bungalow of Mr Azharul Haq, local League leader. He was with them for over an hour and had a hearty chat with them answering all kinds of questions. Then he had a meeting at his residential quarters with Hindus and Muslims belonging to Jehanabad and the surrounding villages. He had then a meeting with the Congressmen which included members of the various Congress Committees. Later he met the members of the local Hindu Mahasabha. Finally he had a heart-to-heart talk with over 25 members of the police force on strike. Then at half past three again he visited the villages of Malathi, Gangasagar, Bola and Allahganj, in which Muslims had suffered badly.

Referring to his visit to the villages, Gandhiji said that naturally he was full of topics on which he wanted to speak and bespeak their attention. He was sorry to tell that Hindu repentance was not open and sincere enough to inspire confidence among the Muslims. He had told the afternoon meeting that it was open to representative Hindus who were present at the meeting to disabuse the Muslims of their suspicion. He was sorry to say that no one Hindu got up to give the needed assurance. He had not the heart therefore, to ask his Muslim hearers whether they (the Hindus) had cleansed their hearts. They were the injured party in Bihar and it was not open to anyone to expect a satisfactory answer from them unless the guilty Hindu party had led the way by repentance. There were yet ring leaders like Mathura Singh roaming about and successfully evading arrest. There was, therefore, little cause for wonder if the Muslims were afraid to return to their respective villages. Gandhiji said that he could not help feeling that the culprit could not long remain at large if the Hindu population did not give him shelter. He asked Mathura Singh's friends and sympathizers to advise him to discover himself and face the consequences of his action. He would also like to tell him that it was no act of bravery for him to evade arrest. He was thus rendering a disservice to himself, his religion and his country. He suggested to the Congressmen, in whose midst the inhumanities were enacted, that they could not free themselves, unless they made every effort to include all the culprits to come out into the open to wash their guilt as publicly as they had committed the crimes.

Continuing, Gandhiji said that he had visited a mosque in the village Bola which was damaged during the disturbances. He was told that on the *Holi* day the mosque was again desecrated by some villagers who played *Holi* inside the mosque premises on the *Holi* day. If it was true, Gandhiji said, it was undoubtedly a notice given by them to the Muslims not to enter their homes even when they were rebuilt nor dare to visit the mosque. If this reported desecration on the *Holi* day was a fact, it was a bad omen for the Hindus, for Bihar and for the whole country.

Gandhiji went on to say that he had heard at the Muslim League meeting in the morning and at the meeting of the Hindus and Muslims in the afternoon that Mahant Bhagwat Das who was a member of the Bihar Legislative Assembly was himself a participator in the crime and was himself present at both the meetings. The speaker advised him whilst he was under suspicion to give up his membership. He was glad to say that Mahant Bhagwant Das, without a moment's hesitation, welcomed the advice and promise at once to act up to it. He also added that he was in no way a participator directly or indirectly in the crime and that he was quite ready to face an open, impartial enquiry to be made by the Muslim League itself. If it was a sincere declaration, Gandhiji said, it was certainly a refreshing thing at a time when there was no real sign of sincere sorrow and repentance on the part of the Hindus in the affected areas. This he was obliged to say in spite of welcome letters of repentance to which he had made reference at the previous evening's meeting....

7. 'Bihar Tragedy: Ministry Decides Not to Appoint Enquiry Committee'

Dawn, 16 April 1947.

Patna, Tuesday.—I understand on the most reliable authority that the idea of setting up of even a one man enquiry commission to enquire into the Bihar tragedy has been given up on Monday. None in the world would be able to know what man did to man during the last disturbances in the province.

Disclosing this decision of the Bihar Government on such an important subject, a source in the closest touch with the Congress Ministerialist party said that the fact was that both the Governor and the Ministry did not want to set up a Commission whose findings would have unmasked their guilt of these tragic days.

GOVERNOR'S INDIFFERENCE

The Governor, he said, did not relish the idea of the appointment of any commission of enquiry because his indifference towards the maintenance of law and order in Bihar right from the days of the Beniabab riot and then his visit to Bombay on a pleasure trip at a time when mass frenzy in his province was at its height, would have been exposed, while the Congress Ministry did not really want to face exposures of its plan which they had put into effect for these disturbances, if any commission had taken up the work.

It may be mentioned here that the demand for the appointment of an independent commission of enquiry into the last tragic happenings was made by Muslims in all parts of India and it also figured as the first demand in the list of fourteen demands which the Muslim League Party put forward before the Ministry here.

During the debate on the no-confidence motion against the Bihar Ministry, the Premier had announced his decision to appoint such a commission without any further delay.

8. One's Sin Is Everyone's Sin

M.K. Gandhi's Talk with the Representatives of Jamiat-Ul-Ulema at Patna, 17 April 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 296–7.

BAPU: Instead of being anxious to find out how many Muslims were killed by the Hindus, your primary duty is to find out how many Hindus the Muslims had killed and where and persuade them not to commit such atrocities. Similarly you should go among the Hindus and serve them. You should assure them that all Muslims are not bad and thus remove their fear. If the nationalist Muslims of India did just this at the risk of their lives they would raise Muslims and Islam to greater heights and Khuda would shower His choicest blessings on them. But today who listens to me? If out of the four crore Muslims I could have only a hundred such brothers and sisters, they would be able to render great service to the forty crore Hindus and Muslims of India. Now, tell me, is anyone of you prepared to take up this mission?

What our brethren are doing is, of course, wrong but we never support them.

BAPU: It is our sorrow that we always think in terms of mine and thine. You should realize that a wrong committed by even a child of India is a wrong committed by each one of us. Till we imbibe this spirit, we shall not have peace.

9. Examples of Hindu Support to Muslim Refugees

M.K. Gandhi's Speech at a Prayer Meeting, 29 April 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 388–90.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

...A meeting was held at Atarpur at which a panchayat of the local Hindus and Muslims was formed. The head of the panchayat came to Patna and exhorted the Muslim refugees to go back to their homes. He told them that they should regard him as their friend as before and trust him. He assured them that he would protect them at the cost of his life. His words had some effect and some fifty Muslim families returned to their villages. They are now living there in peace and they no longer require police protection. The Government also provides them food through General Shah Nawaz. When he distributed the foodstuffs to the Muslims, the Hindus protested. They said the Muslims had suffered at their hands and so they would arrange for their food. And they have been doing it. The local Hindus are also helping the Muslims in harvesting their crops.

Shah Nawaz Saheb also went to Bir. A Muslim from that place went up to him and said that he wanted to return to his village. But he saw danger in going there. The General permitted him to go and, providing him a police escort, asked him to proceed without fear. But as he was going a few Hindus of the village Panchayat stopped him and asked why he had the police escort with him. The Muslim villager was scared. He said he was frightened to go alone. The Hindus said it was a shame on them that he should go under police protection. They urged him to trust them and said that they would look after his safety and he should not have the police to escort him. The Muslim villager was persuaded at last. He realized that the Hindus were after all his friends, and he sent back the escort.

The third thing is that there are also some Sikhs working with Shah Nawaz Saheb who are discharging their responsibilities very well. One among them is Lt Kartar Singh. He carried the beddings of the returning Muslims to their respective houses. The Muslims appreciated this gesture. They thought they need not be afraid of men who had been offering such services to them. When somebody died in one of the Muslim families, Kartar Singh dug the grave all by himself. This has been very largely removing the fear from the hearts of the Muslims. And the work is proceeding well. But that does not mean that things are going on equally well in all places. If, in all the places where the Hindus have committed grave crimes, work is done along the lines followed in these three places, the Muslims would certainly return to their homes. There is no doubt about it. The Government would of course rebuild the houses that have been destroyed or damaged. But you too should help in putting up the houses again.

All the houses should be ready by June. This is what Shah Nawaz Saheb also desires. Hence you must give your full help.

If all the Hindus here start treating the Muslims in a friendly manner, the fire that is raging today would be extinguished. This fire should be put out at once. If no attempts are made to extinguish the fire at its source it would reduce everything to ashes. Bihar is a big province. If all is well here Calcutta and the other places which are going through fire will return to normal.

I wish that when I return from Delhi your hearts would have changed so much that all the Hindus and Muslims of this place would be able to tell me that I need not stay here and that I could go back.



10. Protection for Every Citizen

Extract from a Letter from M.K. Gandhi to Syed Abdul Aziz, 29 April 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, p. 381.

You are less than right when you say that 'the policy of the Government supported by you should help Muslims to decide either to surrender completely to the Congress or to abandon the Province for good'. My policy is no fire-arms to civilians in the ordinary course and perfect protection to every citizen, be he poor or rich. If I know anything of the Government of Bihar, they do not want Muslims or anyone else to surrender to the Congress or leave the Province for good.

11. Reports on Communal Situation in Bihar

Extract from a Letter from Hugh Dow to Louis Mountbatten, 29 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 28, NMML.

...4. Mr Gandhi is back in Bihar, ostensibly devoting himself to rehabilitation. I am very glad that he has been persuaded not to interfere further in the situation arising out of the police mutiny. There is a general feeling among the Muslim community that there is not likely to be another large scale massacre here so long as Gandhi is in Bihar, but I should hesitate to estimate the benefits of his presence among us much higher than that. He doesn't appear to have much influence in inducing a real change of heart in his own community. The actual work of reconstruction, of rebuilding the houses destroyed in the riots, is, if anything, being impeded by his presence. Houlton, the Relief Commissioner, is getting very fed up with his job, and will soon be leaving it. He finds it difficult to get orders from the Ministers, who send him to discuss matters with Gandhi, who generally goes off at a tangent and makes some quite impracticable suggestion. The latest of these is that the ministry should acquire the lands of all Muslims who wish to leave the province.

12. 'Bihar & Noakhali—A Study in Contrast: Impressions of Mazhar Imam's Bengal Tour'

Extracts from a Report in *Dawn*, 2 May 1947.

PATNA, Thursday.—AN emphatic assertion that there was perfect peace and order in Noakhali area as a result of the stringent measures taken by the Bengal Government and the good neighbourly feeling shown by the majority community has been made by Mr Mazhar Imam, MLA, Chief Whip of the Muslim League Party in the Bihar Assembly who returned here on Wednesday after an extensive tour of those areas undertaken by him with Bihar's Development Minister, Doctor Syed Mahmud in company.

He further says that any propaganda to the contrary was dishonest and malicious was meant by the Hindu Press and the Congress leadership only to further their nefarious political designs against the Muslims and Bengal's popular Government.

'As regards the cases of loot, arson, murder etc., which were attributed to the communal frenzy of the majority community by Professor Nirmal Bose of Gandhi's camp which unnerved even Mr Gandhi, I can confidently say they were no more than pure and simple criminal incidents in which both the Hindus and Muslims had suffered.

‘When in the presence of Doctor Syed Mahmud, I asked the Professor if it was the Hindus only that had suffered and not the Muslims he asserted it was so but the diary of the Hindu Sub-Inspector of Police of Rangunj area of the period beginning from March 22 to April 22 told quite a different tale because out of a total of 98 such cases, 30 were the terrible sufferers at the hands of the element [*sic*] and in cases of burglary alone, 19 were Hindu and 12 Muslim and in those of theft, 30 Hindu and 4 Muslim, where as in the solitary one case of abduction that was reported, it was a Muslim that had suffered and not a Hindu....’

‘My visit to much maligned Noakhali area made me fully convinced how low the Hindu Press the Congress leadership can stoop to further their political game by blackmailing a certain person and how distortion of truth has become their daily bread to nourish upon, from which even Mr Gandhi cannot escape.

‘Even if the Bengal Government had not done anything towards the refugees, I do not think that Mr Gandhi, the Congress or its Ministry in Bihar have the face to complain about it when they themselves are treating lakhs and lakhs of the Bihar sufferers in the most indifferent way and have not done anything yet tangible enough to relieve the distress of our people with the result that they are still running hither and thither in the province and thousands have perished in the meantime....’

13. ‘Transfer of Power Should Come with Peace’

Extracts from M.K. Gandhi’s Bihar Tour Diary

Harijan, 4 May 1947.

14-4-’47

In the course of his post-prayer speech at Bankipur *maidan* this evening Gandhiji said that he had heard disquieting news from Noakhali. Satis Babu and also Haran Babu had both informed him about the rapidly deteriorating situation, giving facts and figures. If what he had heard proved to be true, he might have to fast, since by going to Bihar while his work in Noakhali was still unfinished he had earned the right of fasting against misdeeds in Noakhali. That did not, however, mean that fasting was a certainty. He, however, felt bound to hint at the possibility.

Gandhiji also referred to his talks with the Viceroy at Delhi and said that both in public and private conversations the Viceroy declared that he was going to be the last Viceroy of India, and that also only up to June 30, 1948.

Gandhiji felt that the Viceroy was honest in his profession. The British were already preparing for transfer of power. Gandhiji felt that he realized that the transfer of power must be peaceful if Britain was to escape the charge that during her reign of more than a century she had brought up nothing but fight among ourselves. It was a sad sight that while freedom was almost within their grasp they were fighting among themselves. All the important members of the Congress, whether in the Interim Government or outside it, were trying their best to grasp freedom and to establish peace in the country, freeing it from at least the major portion of the evils of the old order.

15-4-’47

After the prayer Gandhiji said that while he was in Delhi he received letters from Bihar, some couched in thoughtless language, some in the language of praise and a few expressing doubt if

he was ever returning to Bihar to finish his work. The last needed no reply. Praise was wholly unnecessary for one doing one's duty as he was doing his. He, however, singled out one letter which he thought was based on pure ignorance. It doubted the wisdom of the speaker leaving his work in Noakhali and coming to Bihar at the instance of Dr Syed Mahmud and daring to accept his hospitality.

The critic forgot that Dr Mahmud was Gandhiji's friend and that he had known Dr Mahmud's father-in-law before he knew the late Brij Kishore Prasad of revered memory or Dr Rajendra Prasad. In his opinion Dr Mahmud had rendered a service to the Hindus and the Muslims of Bihar by bringing him to Bihar. For, if Bihar remained sane in the midst of possible madness throughout India, Bihar would raise India in the estimation of the world and leave to the world a singular example of sanity in the midst of surrounding insanity. This he had a right to expect by right of service and more so because the Bihar Hindus, however illiterate they might be, were votaries of Rama, the incarnation of all the good in the world. Although evil seemed at times to rule the world, the eternal truth was that the world lived so long as goodness resided even in one person. Evil was naught. If Bihar remained good in the midst of temptation, it was well with it, and well with the whole of India.

The insinuation that there was a sinister motive behind drawing him away from Noakhali, namely that the Noakhali Muslims might be free from his (Gandhiji's) restraining influence, was too flimsy to bear examination. For, if he succeeded wholly in Bihar, it was impossible for very shame that the Noakhali Muslims should go mad....

17-4-'47

At the prayer meeting today Gandhiji drew attention to the fact that for the sake of the Muslim friends who wished to join the prayers—and the day had grown longer—the prayer time was advanced by fifteen minutes. He also warned those who were inclined to laugh at the selections from the Quran and other scriptures against the practice. They ought to cultivate the same regard for other religions that they had for their own. Not to do so was to belittle one's own faith and expose it to attacks from without.

After the prayer he referred to the visits he had from Muslim friends who complained to him that in and about Bihar Sharif and Monghyr things were not quite favourable to the return of the refugees. If the information was correct, he was very sorry. The heat was so oppressive that he had not the heart to undertake arduous traveling during the hot weather but he would have no other recourse if the Hindus in those places had not the spirit of repentance and did not resume their friendliness towards their Muslim neighbours, no matter how few they were. It was suggested to him that arms should be issued to the Muslims who were in fear of their Hindu neighbours. Those who made such suggestions did not know him. He would not issue any license to the Muslims or to the Hindus for the purpose of self-defence. It was a sign of barbarity. He would even take away the arms from those who had them already. Their arms were a living faith in God and a stout heart born of that faith.

He had also a visit from the *zamindars* who, among other things, had complained of growing lawlessness among the peasantry and labour. He deplored the fact. It was a blot on the fair name of Bihar. Such lawlessness was criminal and was bound to involve the very peasantry and labour in ruin, let alone the *zamindars* who were after all a mere handful. He fervently hoped that the lesson of the past thirty years in the virtue of non-violence would not be lost upon the people of Bihar. He was quite prepared to say for the sake of argument that the *zamindars* were guilty of many crimes and of omissions and commissions. But that was no reason for the

peasant and the labourer who were the salt of the earth to copy crime. If salt lost its savour wherewith could it be salted?

18-4-'47

...He next referred to the complaint he had received about a punitive tax that was levied. He felt that the State had no other alternative if the people would not give up the criminals. Nor could the State carry out mass arrests where hundreds and thousands were involved in shameful crimes. Punitive tax was then the only remedy. The only way by which the people could render the punitive tax unnecessary was to repent and undo the wrong done by voluntary labour and contributions. They should also approach the injured Muslims and request them to go back to their homes. They should assure them that they would regard them as their dear ones....

14. 'Separate Ministries for Hindu and Non-Hindu Bihar Demanded'

Dawn, 6 May 1947.

By a correspondent

In the open session of the Division of Bihar Conference held at Gaya on April 19, 1947 under the Presidentship of Chowdury Abid Hussain, MLA (Central), the following resolutions were passed unanimously.

- (1) In view of the historic fact that the present heterogeneous composite province of Bihar was hastily carved out from the Presidency of Bengal as a result of the annulment of partition of Bengal in 1912 and further in view of the historic ethnic, geographical, cultural, linguistic, topographical, economic and political division of the present artificial province, and whereas the caste Hindu dominated Congress Ministry has hopelessly and totally failed to protect the life, honour, property and religion of the Muslim minority of the province; and whereas the Congress Ministry has not conceded the just and simple demand of the Muslims for the consolidation of Muslim population and lands in selected pockets; and whereas the Muslims and other minorities can have no sense of security under the caste-Hindu dominated Congress Ministry, this Conference demands that the province of Bihar be forthwith partitioned into Hindu and non-Hindu autonomous provinces.
- (2) This Conference demands that pending the division of Bihar into Hindu and non-Hindu autonomous provinces, separate Ministries be immediately formed for the Hindu and non-Hindu autonomous provinces and each Ministry be made directly responsible to the Governor.
- (3) Resolved that a provisional Committee of Action of the Division of Bihar Conference consisting of the following gentlemen be formed to carry on the struggle for the division of the province and to prepare a comprehensive programme of work, President Mr Burhan Uddin Khan, MLA (Santhal Parganas); Vice-Presidents; (1) Mr Syed Mazhar Imam, MLA (Patna); (2) Mr Razi Uddin, MLA (Purnea); (3) Mr Karrar Hussain Rizvi, Pleader (Palamau); General Secretary: Mr Mahboob Ahmad Warsi, Pleader (Gaya); Joint Secretary: (1) Mr Sulian Mohammad Afzal (Patna) (2) Mr Nizam Uddin (Santhal Parganas) and (3) Mr S.M. Farooque, Pleader (Gaya).

The following were elected members: (1) Mr Maqbool Ahmad, Pleader, MLA Bhagalpore (2) Dr S.M. Farid, MLA Darbhanga (3) Mr Gholam Mohi Uddin,

MLA Shahabad (4) Hakim Ramzan, Alio Shah, Hazaribagh (5) Mr Syed Mujtaba Ahmad, Provincial Muslim Students' Federations, Patna (6) Dr Laeeque Ahmad Hashmi, Muzaffarpore. (7) Mr Saghirul Haque, Mokhter, Siwan (8) Mr Mohi Uddin Ahmad, Advocate, Ranchi (9) Moulana Abdul Wassy Siddiqui, Bhagalpore (10) Mr Syed Abu Zafar, Advocate, MLA Monghyr (11) Moulana Mohammad Abbas Vidyarthi, Muzzaffarpore (12) Hakim Fakher Uddin Razi, Provincial Muslim National Guards, Patna (13) Mr Syed Amin Ahmad, MLA Singhbhum.

- (4) In view of the unjust and unfriendly attitude of the Congress and unequal allotment of portfolios between the two major parties in contravention of the solemn declaration of the British Cabinet Mission, this Conference demands there should immediately be formed TWO Interim Governments at the Centre. One in-charge of Pakistan province and the other in-charge of Hindustan provinces.
- (5) This Conference demands that the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force, Ordnance Factories, Military plants, Establishments and stores be equally divided between the Pakistan provinces and Hindustan Provinces.
- (6) This Conference fully supports the demand of the Adibassis for a separate autonomous province of Jharkhand.

15. 'No Communal Bitterness in Bihar—Success of Gandhiji's Mission'

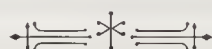
Extracts from a Report from *The Hindustan Times*, 7 May 1947.

Patna, May 5.—A review of the communal situation in Bihar after the second visit of Mahatma Gandhi shows that the whole atmosphere has changed to one of goodwill and friendliness.

Bitterness has vanished. Fraternal feelings have returned. Members of the majority community are in many ways making amends for their past mistakes. They seem to be anxious for the restoration of the good old days when their Muslim neighbours lived in full confidence with them.

The minority community has also not been slow to respond to this gesture. Muslim refugees are taking full advantage of the new rehabilitation drive launched by the Bihar Government and settling back in the villages.

In spite of Gandhiji's efforts, politics stands in many places in the way of the friendly mingling of the two communities. Muslims in general have no doubt begun to realize that they have to live in this province Pakistan or no Pakistan. Still, many of them, belonging to the League school of thought, are holding back their support. Possibly it is the feeling of uncertainty about the future that is responsible for this attitude. They are watching hundreds of their co-religionists moving back to their original homes in the rural areas. It is, however, expected that they will finally join with the co-operating refugees when Gandhiji revisits Bihar to give the finishing touches to his peace mission.



16. Patel Opposes Enquiry Commission into Riots

Extract from a Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten, 8 May 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 28, NMML.

New Delhi

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

Please refer to your letter No. 1440 dated the 27th April 1947 and my reply thereto of the 28th April 1947 regarding the law and order position in Bihar. ...

5. As regards the appointment of a commission to enquire into the Bihar riots, I agree with the Governor and yourself that this step would be most inadvisable. I have exerted my influence to the extent I could to dissuade Gandhiji from pursuing this matter further, but the difficulty is created by the insistent demand of the League leaders, both inside and outside the Province. Suhrawardy has written and spoken to Gandhiji on this subject and Mr Jinnah, during his last interview with Gandhiji, also referred to this matter. In the circumstances, the best course may lie in delays and that I understand the Prime Minister is doing.

6. The Governor has been good enough to refer to my support to the Prime Minister in a strong line against the prominent members of the Congress Socialist Party and other individuals and measures undermining the discipline of the police force in the Province. You must know full well how anxious I am to exert myself to the utmost of my capacity to maintain peace and security in India. I hope you will convey to the Governor the pledge of my firm support to his Prime Minister in achieving this in the Province of Bihar.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

17. 'League Leaders Should Have Gone to Noakhali to Make Muslims Repent—Dr Syed Mahmud's Suggestion'

The Tribune, 8 May 1947.

Patna, May 6.—'I wish that any front rank Muslim League leader, instead of entering into controversy about the comparative conditions in Bihar and Noakhail, had gone to Noakhail on a similar mission as of Mahatma Gandhi in Bihar of creating sincere repentance among the Muslims there with a view to bring about the restoration of old relations of brotherhood and harmony,' says Dr Syed Mahmood, Minister of Development Bihar, in the course of a statement.

He says: 'My attention has been drawn to a statement in the press by Mr Mazhar Imam, MLA (Bihar) about the present situation in Noakhali. There is no doubt that saner elements have begun to realize their own responsibilities and they all assured us that they would do their very best to exert their influence in restoring confidence and in curbing the unruly elements of this notoriously criminal district.

'Mr Mazhar Imam, who visited Noakhali along with me, has done a public service by visiting Noakhali and by impressing upon the local Muslims that as members of the majority community it was their duty to protect the Hindus from the misdeeds of miscreants and to create conditions favourable to the restoration of complete confidence. It is however, to be regretted that he has tried to make political capital out of his visit, by making statements like

this and by questioning the veracity of eminent men like Seth Satish Chandra Das Gupta and Professor Nirmal Bose who are held in high esteem. Mahatma Gandhi, in spite of very heavy demands on his time, has come to Bihar on the “do or die” mission so that Hindus in Bihar may realize their follies and try to undo the wrongs done to their Muslim brethren by doing their honest attempt to foster confidence and sense of security among the Muslims. I wish that any front rank Muslim League leader instead of entering into controversy about the comparative conditions in Bihar and Noakhali had gone to Noakhali on a similar mission of creating sincere repentance among the Muslims there with a view to bring about the restoration of old relations of brotherhood and harmony.

‘So long I refrained from making any public statement about my impression of Noakhali, as I was, and am still waiting to see how far the assurances given by the Muslims and the local officials there were being acted upon. The Hon’ble Chief Minister of Bengal has also assured me that he would do all that lies in his power to restore confidence among the Hindus of the affected areas and to put down lawlessness at all cost. He has already issued definite instructions to that effect. Time alone will show how far they succeed.’—API

18. Cow-protection and Role of Hindus and Muslims

Extracts from M.K. Gandhi’s Bihar Tour Diary for April 1947

Harijan, 11 May 1947.

Gandhiji having heard that some Hindus were whispering to one another that Muslims being beef-eaters were the natural enemies of Hinduism and were, therefore, fit to be destroyed. Gandhiji, therefore, devoted his remarks to the topic of cow-protection. He said that nearly forty years ago he wrote about it in *Hind Swaraj* in South Africa. He was from his childhood a devotee of the cow. He believed her to be the natural mother of prosperity. But he had expressed the opinion in *Hind Swaraj* that cow-protection societies were destroyers of the cow and not her protectors. To this view he adhered even today. True devotion to the cow required broad-mindedness and an accurate knowledge of the art and science concerning the protection of the cow. In no country on the earth were the cow and her progeny so ill-treated as in India which, strangely enough, was the only country where the cow was venerated. Their veneration, however, consisted of mere words and deadly quarrel with the Muslims over cow-killing. The very Hindus who quarrelled with the Muslims because they slaughtered the cow for the beef she gave were not ashamed to accept the mastery of the English who were known to be beef-eaters in a sense in which the Muslims never were. He had no quarrel with the Englishmen because they ate beef and as such he had none with the Muslims either. He was concerned with showing the great inconsistency of the Hindus who for the sake of money gladly served their English masters and quarrelled with the Muslims. Then they forgot that there were Hindus who gladly partook of beef. He had known orthodox *vaishnavas* who ate beef-extract when it was prescribed by their doctors. He reminded the audience of the fact that during the Khilafat days thousands of cows were saved from the Muslim knife. The late Maulana Abdul Bari used to say that if the Hindus helped the Muslims to save the Khilafat, the Muslims were bound to save the cow for the sake of the Hindus. From every point of view, therefore, he held that it was insensate on the part of the Hindus to be angry with their Muslim brethren because they ate beef and slaughtered cows. He quoted numerous instances to show the utterly inconsistent behaviour of the Hindus in this matter. He therefore, asked the Hindus to put their own house in order before it tottered to its ruin.

19. Call for Division of Bihar

Extracts from a Letter from Mahboob Ahmad Warsi to M.A. Jinnah, 19 May 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 801–5.

GAYA

Dear Sir,

In forwarding a printed copy of the resolutions passed in the Second Session of the Division of Bihar Conference held at Patna on the 11th May, 1947, under the presidentship of Mr Mohammad Noman, MLA (Central), I have the honour to inform you that, according to the terms of Resolution No. 1, a deputation has to wait on you on behalf of the Division of Bihar Conference to impress upon you the imperative necessity of carving out 1/6th area in Bihar for the formation of a national homeland for the 50 lacs of helpless, unprotected and oppressed Muslims of the province.

I request you most earnestly to kindly fix a date for the deputation to meet you at New Delhi on or before the 30th of the current month and inform me of the same by wire.

Thanking you in anticipation,

With best regards and respects,

Yours faithfully,

M.A. WARSI

General Secretary

Division of Bihar Conference

....*Enclosure*

COPIES OF RESOLUTIONS PASSED IN THE SECOND SESSION OF THE DIVISION OF
 BIHAR CONFERENCE HELD IN THE ANJUMAN ISLAMIA HALL, PATNA, ON 11 MAY 1947,
 UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE BIHAR PROVINCIAL MUSLIM STUDENTS FEDERATION,
 UNDER THE PRESIDENTSHIP OF MOHAMMAD NOMAN, MLA

1. Resolved that a deputation consisting of the following gentlemen with power to co-opt two more members be formed to wait on the Quaid-i-Azam, M.A. Jinnah, on behalf of the Division of Bihar Conference to impress upon him the imperative necessity of carving out 1/6th area in Bihar for the formation of a national homeland for the 50 lac helpless, unprotected and oppressed Muslims of the Province.
 - (a) Mr Burhan Uddin Khan, MLA
 - (b) Mr Mahboob Ahmad Warsi
 - (c) Syed Mazhar Imam, MLA
 - (d) Mr Mohammad Noman, MLA (Central)
 - (e) Syed Mujtaba Ahmad
2. Resolved that the members of the deputation are empowered to select five experts to draw up a plan for the division of the province in the light of the resolutions passed in the Division of Bihar Conference at its last session at Gaya.
3. Whereas the people of Chhotanagpur and Santhal Parganas are nationally, culturally and linguistically distinct and different from those inhabiting other parts of Bihar; and whereas in these areas the Adibasis are 4,451,104, Muslims 810,680, Scheduled Castes

547,699, and Caste Hindus 3,887,694; and whereas the Adibasis and the Muslims together form the majority and most of the Scheduled Castes also support the demand for the separation of Chhotanagpur; and whereas the attitude of the present Congress Ministry of Bihar is inimical towards the Adibasis and the Muslims; this session of the Division of Bihar Conference therefore demands immediate establishment of the Jharkand Province and formation of a separate Ministry for the said province.

4. In view of the complete betrayal of the solemn promise made by the Premier of Bihar during the debate on the no-confidence motion moved by the Muslim League party in Bihar Assembly against the Congress Ministry of Bihar, that the Congress Ministry of Bihar would not force the Muslim refugees and sufferers of the last Bihar carnage to go back and settle in the same ruined, devastated and dangerous villages; and in view of the present policy of the Congress Ministry with regard to the rehabilitation of the Muslim refugees; the session of the Division of Bihar Conference demands of the Congress Ministry of Bihar to at once give up its present policy of forcing the Muslim refugees to go back to the same ruined, devastated and dangerous villages, for in the opinion of this Conference such a policy is fraught with grave danger to the Muslim life, honour, property, and religion and any expenditure incurred in connection with the rehabilitation of the Muslim refugees in such dangerous zones would be a sheer waste of public money.
5. In view of the fact that the much trumpeted peace mission of Mr Gandhi in Bihar hopelessly failed to produce any effect and there has neither been any change of heart on the part of the Hindus nor in anti-Muslim policy of the Congress Ministry of Bihar, this session of the Division of Bihar Conference cannot with any sense of responsibility advise the Muslim refugees and sufferers of the Bihar carnage to go back and re-settle in their original villages, for there being available no guarantee of their future safety and security they would always be exposed to danger. This session demands of the Congress Ministry to immediately accept the demands made by the Provincial Muslim League.
6. The Conference strongly condemns the Congress Government of Bihar for its high-handed and unconstitutional policy of shifting down [*sic*] the Muslim public opinion and depriving the Muslim public of Bihar of the facilities of correct Muslim news by banning the entry of the *Morning News* in the Province which is a further negation of granting civil liberties to the Muslim press by demanding securities by [*sic*] the other Muslim press such as the *Sada-i-Aam* and stopping subsidy of the Orient Press.

20. 'Stocktaking in Bihar'

Extracts from an Editorial in *Dawn*, 29 May 1947.

The hell that was let loose in Bihar and which brought in its wake immense sufferings and privations on the members of the minority community did not succeed in extinguishing the spark of dignity that burns in the heart of every Musalman. The prolonged agony of the Muslims of Bihar, inspite of what it has meant to them in terms of physical hardships and tribulations, has neither damaged their morale nor undermined their confidence in themselves or in their brethren outside Bihar. A noble example of the moral and political resuscitation of Muslim Bihar—even though their physical wounds have not healed up—is the splendid response of

the grief-stricken Muslims in the Bihar Muslim Political Conference where a lakh of them rallied under the banner of their national organization. It was not in a conventional sense that this first Conference of Bihar Muslims since the Bihar calamity took stock of the situation and grappled with grave problems confronting them....

A little reflection can give one an idea of the magnitude and enormity of these problems and of the situation resulting from what Mr Ghazanfar Ali Khan, who presided over the Conference, called the 'amazing callousness with which the provincial administration treated those happenings.' The Health Member in his characteristic emphatic manner dealt with the 'criminally lenient, attitude of the Provincial administration towards the criminals,' and made out a powerful case for an impartial enquiry into those blood-curdling when he said: 'There have been loud and persistent cries for an impartial enquiry. The Congress Ministry has not yet, however, made any move to meet the demands or to vindicate its own position. This is, I dare say, nothing short of self-indictment by the Congress Ministry, more eloquent and conclusive than any indictments others could make.' The strangest part of the performance or rather wilful negligence of the Congress Ministry which Mr Ghazanfar Ali Khan mentioned was the total non-imposition of any 'collective fines even in those areas which are known to have taken a concerted part in these massacres.' The policy of conniving at and abetting the deeds of the communal gangsters could not be taken to this absurd limit even by the most avowed champions of communal jingoism. The Bihar Ministry by their wilful disregard of the need of justice which they displayed have conspicuously added a chapter to the basic jurisprudence of the Jungle law.

If all that has happened in Bihar is to be forgotten—as Mr Gandhi in his puerile innocence would it should—what does the future hold in store for an unarmed and undefended minority of less than 15 per cent, which the brazen-faced 'nationalism' of the Bihar Congress would not touch with a pair of tongs? What store does the Bihar Ministry set by modern democratic values and the universally cherished conception of 'equality of all citizens before law?' The clear answer that emerges from the Ministry's practice during and after the disturbances, as reflected in their criminal negligence of and callous indifference towards the problems of Muslim Bihar, is a definite 'no'. And inspite of Mr Gandhi's immense faith in the scrupulousness of his Bihar lieutenants and in their capacity to befriend the Bihar Muslims, the fact remains that they have shown scant regard for anything Muslim.

It was in these circumstances when frustration was writ large on Muslim Bihar that the Muslim Political Conference met and discussed the future of the Musalmans in that province. The Conference took note of the grave problem of the refugees and of their rehabilitation and rightly warned them against the activities of those who were working as concealed agents of the Ministry and popularizing the idea that they should return in their devastated villages even before the League's demand that the Government should provide facilities for rehabilitation and give a guarantee of future security was conceded. The conference gave a positive lead to Muslim Bihar when it unequivocally and emphatically voiced the demand for the incorporation of the 'District of Purnea and all such neighbouring places which have a Muslim majority' in Bengal. Coming as it does at a time when the future of India is going to be decided in a matter of months, this opportune move will pave the way for the emancipation of about one million Muslims residing in Bihar's Muslim majority area contiguous to Bengal, from the yoke of caste Hindu domination which will be a perpetual menace.



21. Bihari Hindus Should Seek Atonement

Extracts from M.K. Gandhi's Bihar Tour Diary

Harijan, 1 June 1947.

19-5-'47

Gandhiji addressed a huge but a perfectly quiet audience at Barh this evening. He congratulated the audience and the volunteers for the perfect order maintained. With the advent of their own Government the latter had to play the new role of builders of the nation, for which they required to build considerably on the constructive training received incidentally during their fight against the foreign Government because of the non-violent character of the fight.

His topic, however, for the evening, continued Gandhiji, was the great sin Bihar had committed and its atonement. He warned the people against falling into the snare of the seemingly plausible argument that in view of Muslim provocation, retaliation was inevitable and the only effective method of putting an end to it. To answer brutality with brutality was to admit one's moral and intellectual bankruptcy and it could only start a vicious circle of which they had already seen so many manifestations. He could only say that if they continued their mad game, they would not be able to retain the independence that was coming.

Barh was one of those fortunate places which did not entirely go mad. But it could not escape the responsibility for the acts of those around it. It was difficult to estimate what India had already lost through madnesses like Bihar's or what she might have to lose in future. The only way to escape the consequences of their acts was to show genuine repentance and thus lighten the heavy responsibility of Ansari Saheb, with which he had been entrusted by the ministry. The people should refuse to shelter criminals who had acted barbarously or who were still threatening the returning Muslims under the false belief that they had done something heroic. How it could be heroic, Gandhiji said, he failed to understand.

To the criminals Gandhiji said that as a mark of true repentance they should surrender themselves to the police and bear the punishment that might be meted out to them. Even otherwise it was in their interest to surrender, for if the Government and the police did their duty—which they must if they wanted to justify their existence—they would be arrested sooner or later. A voluntary surrender was bound to win them consideration from the court. What he had said, continued Gandhiji, should not be dismissed as a counsel of cowardice....

20-5-'47

This evening Gandhiji's prayer was held at Hilsa, one of the worst affected areas in the riots. Addressing the gathering after prayer was over he said that it was a matter of great shame and sorrow. But the shame of the sin could be turned to good account by adequate repentance. All the religions that he had studied were full of instances proving the maxim: 'The greater the sinner the greater the saint'. For the poignancy of the pain of the guilt enhanced the joy that a guiltless life brought with it. The speaker wished that the maxim could be proved true in the reformed life of the people of Hilsa. They would be repelled by physical dirt. Surely the repulsion caused by mental dirt which the insanity of the Hindus of Hilsa meant was much greater than the pain caused by any physical dirt however great. He was wondering, continued Gandhiji, how he could awaken genuine repentance in the hearts of the Hindus of Hilsa. It had been suggested to him that if he settled down in Hilsa and went from house to house, he would be able to effect the desired transformation. Although there was truth in the remark,

he must own his physical weakness and consequent inability to follow the advice. They were none the better for his confession. He hoped, therefore, that his remarks would penetrate the hearts of the large audience and that they would invite the Muslim sufferers to return.

He had been told that many Muslims came to see the place and finding it unprepared left it. He expected them to help the process of renovation of the shattered houses. The rainy season was approaching. They should, therefore, be quick about their work. Till then it was their duty to accommodate the Muslims in their own houses as they would accommodate their own blood relations. The Hindus and the Muslims had lived like blood relations in Bihar before. There was no reason why they should not revive the old time.

If the Hindus showed the spirit of brotherliness, concluded Gandhiji, it would be good for Bihar, for India and the world.

21-5-'47

Gandhiji addressed a mammoth gathering at Bikram this evening. He congratulated the audience for the perfect quiet maintained throughout the prayer and the correct beating of time in the singing of *Ramadhun*.

He also congratulated them for keeping their sanity while insanity raged all round—thanks to the efforts of Congressmen and other Hindus. Still some tension did exist and many Muslims left the place out of fear. As the houses were intact, the problem of their repair did not arise. The Hindus could, however, clean up lanes and houses deserted by the Muslims and create such an atmosphere of hospitality that the Muslims would be forced to return.

Gandhiji next took up the thread of his talk at Hilsa where he had dropped it the day before. He had heard from various quarters that ever since the acceptance of office by the Congress it was abandoning its tradition of penance, sacrifice and service, so painfully built up during its glorious history of over 60 years, from its humble beginnings in 1885 to the present day when it had become a mighty organization having millions of followers. They said that it was fast becoming an organization of selfish power-seekers and job-hunters. Instead of remaining the servants of the public, Congressmen had become its lords and masters. The Congress was, moreover, torn by petty intrigues and group rivalries. What he said was true of all the provinces. If that continued, he was afraid Indians would not be able to retain the precious thing that was approaching. For that they required knowledge, understanding and purity of mind. If the Congress and the League did not retain the requisite purity and strength, they would find all power slipping from their hands. They could not hope to maintain it with the help of the bayonet like the British. All their power came from the people, who were the real masters, though they might not realize it at the moment. The Congress won their confidence through years of service. If it betrayed them, he was afraid, they would fall a prey to the white robed *goondas* of society in whose hands all power would pass.

He had come to Bihar for solving the Hindu-Muslim problem but things were so interrelated that he was forced to take up other issues as well. He had, therefore, dwelt on the corruption that was coming in the Congress. The Congress should be above party intrigues and be a symbol of unity and service of the whole of India....



22. 'Chargesheet against Bihar Government II'

Extracts from a Report from *Dawn*, 3 June 1947.

It was urged upon the Government soon after the carnage that unless they wished to perpetuate the disastrous consequences of all that had happened, they must at once proceed to set up a specially effective and powerful machinery under pre-eminently conscientious and painstaking officers, at least half of whom must be Muslims, invested with extraordinary powers to carry on the difficult and huge tasks of apprehending the culprits, recovering the abducted girls and searching for the looted properties. In anticipation of the difficulties due partly to the abnormal conditions prevailing and partly to the corruption, which is only too rampant in the rank and file of so many departments of the administration, we tried to impress upon the Government that such a reliable and powerful organization assisted by an equally reliable detective corps, could alone deal with the situation effectively.

All these proposals were summarily rejected and the performance of these huge tasks was left to the usual Police methods. It was apparent to all keen observers that when monetary considerations could easily weigh with the Police, in addition to the usual sloth and indifference as well as the communal passions and inclinations of so many in the Police force, the afflicted and the impoverished minority had little reason to expect genuine sympathy and fair dealings and the prospects for justice were poor indeed. A few abducted girls have been rescued and some looted properties here and there recovered through the unusual efforts of some exceptionally conscientious and painstaking officers, but the failures of the Police in connection with investigation into the cases and searches for the abducted girls and looted properties are simply appalling.

Hundreds of the girls reported to have been abducted and kidnapped remain undetected and rumours have it that many of them have, by now, been transported across the borders of this Province and many others have conveniently been done away with. As a rule it has been the bitter and baffling experience of those who approached the authorities in this connection to find callous indifference and a general unwillingness to take full and appropriate measures as required by the difficulties of the situation. The aggrieved persons who were forced to abandon their homes and hearths and could hardly dare to venture into the country side, on appealing for the rescue of their dear ones, were peremptorily told by the authorities that they should give 'exact' information about the identity of the persons who abducted their women and about the present whereabouts of the abducted women, before the Government machinery could be expected to move.

The Government may or may not still be doing something in this connection, in their own leisurely way, but timely, appropriate and energetic actions could have saved the innocent women from a life of shame and slavery and many of them from a cruel and untimely death as well....

I shall not deal, here, with the devious and the diverse ways in which the aggrieved minority continues to be harassed and oppressed. The facts discussed are sufficient to bear out how recklessly the elementary principles of social justice and fair play are trampled upon in this Province. The complacency of the Governor of Bihar, the Viceroy and the British Government does not seem to have been disturbed by the calamitous happenings in this Province and apparently they have not deemed it necessary to intervene and use their special powers.

The representatives of the British Imperialism never hesitate to intervene when their own interests are threatened but they have been prevented by their 'democratic scruples' to do

so when the life, honour and liberty of a whole community are shattered and when, indeed, the essential principles of the civilized existence and Government appear to have been cast away.

Section 93 Government in the Punjab has not only established an iron rule but is conducting its policy vindictively against the majority community there. For events much less dreadful in conception and execution and much less disastrous in consequences, all the resources of the State, Civil and Military, have been called up to inflict the most severe punishments on the majority community.

Are the British also of the view that different measures of justice are to be meted out to the different nations and communities in India? Are all the pains and penalties intended for the offending majorities of one nation or community only and all the measures of succour and support for the aggrieved minorities of another nation or community alone? Are these traditions of democratic freedom, social justice and civilized Government which the British Imperialists wish to leave as their legacy to India after quitting this Sub-Continent? These are the pertinent questions which we are constrained to ask at the end of this article.

23. Savarkar Congratulates Bihar Hindus

Statement by V.D. Savarkar, 11 June 1947

S.S. Savarkar and G.M. Joshi (Eds), *Historic Statements*, V.D. Savarkar, pp. 199–201.

‘Hindus in Behar! I congratulate you on the Pan-Hindu patriotism and valour with which you did not only meet but did even forestall anti-Hindu aggression. You have thereby not only saved yourselves but even our Hindu brethren in adjoining provinces.

I am aware of the campaign of vilification and persecution carried against you by the Moslems and the Hindu Quislings all over India. In their eyes the blackest crime you committed consisted in the fact that you should have been deeply stirred by the atrocities committed on the Hindus in Bengal. They might as well condemn the hand for striking a serpent which only bit the toe! They conveniently forgot that Hindudom is an Organic National Being. If a Hindu gets ill treated as a Hindu in any part of the world it constitutes an insult to Hindudom as a whole and must be challenged by Hindus on any front convenient to them.

Again these very calumniators never found anything criminal in the fact that the Khan Brothers, Mr Jinnah, the Moslem Ministers in Sind and Bengal and even Gandhiji and Nehru—none of whom was a Behari—should have shuddered, got shocked, shed tears and made the cause of the Moslems of Behar their own. They seem to think that Moslems are justified in avenging even a just chastisement meted out to Moslems in any part of the world but if the Hindus in Behar feel the cause of the Hindus in Bengal their own they deserve for this crime to be bombed and bulleted en masse!

But I assure you, oh valiant Hindu sufferers in Behar, that millions on millions of Hindus all over Hindusthan have been blessing you as defenders of Hindu Faith and Hindu Honour precisely for this very fact that the Pan-Hindu Spirit which is descending down like an angel with a Godly message of hope, should have found such a splendid response in your thoughts and deeds.

I learn that Gandhiji has been exhorting that before the rains fall every Hindu householder in Behar should shelter some homeless Moslems under his roof and treat them as members of the family. That gentleman does not seem to think his life mission fulfilled by merely cutting

off parts of our Motherland and handing them over to the Moslems to make room for their Pakistan. He wants now to turn every Hindu house into a bit of Pakistan and of Naokhali [*sic*] even before Mr Jinnah demands it all. I ask you to brush aside these exhortations as the ravings of a Monomaniac. If a Hindu has a corner under his roof and a morsel of food to spare let him shelter and feed some Hindu refugees from Bengal or the Punjab before the rains fall. For, they are indeed your brothers in faith, in flesh, in blood and essentially in the will to love and live together as brothers.

But above all, oppose tooth and nail the sinister attempt to allot separate areas to the Moslems in Behar to settle down. Beware of the fact that within a few years these Moslem areas would be claimed as stepping stones in the progress of the Pakistani corridor. Take care of the Congressite Ministry there, which may yield clandestinely to this Moslem demand at any moment. The Moslem refugees who want to return to their homes do not do so to oblige the Hindus there. They may quietly go back severally to their respective villages if it suits them or better still need not return at all to Behar.'

C. BOMBAY

1. Report from Bombay Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bombay for Second Half of March 1947,
3 April 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.

....3. *Communal*.—Serious communal riots broke out suddenly in Bombay City on the night of March 30th. The immediate cause is rather obscure but the following circumstances led to the outbreak. A Hindu pedestrian happened to be run over by a lorry at about 5.30 p.m. and it was rumoured that he was deliberately knocked down by a Muslim driver, though the actual fact was that he was knocked down by a Military lorry driven by a Christian. A pool of blood on the spot where he was knocked down continued to agitate the local inhabitants and gave currency to the false rumour. A 'Ram Navami' procession passed along this road peacefully and as soon as it terminated a mob of Hindu youths stoned a Masjid. This was a signal for mobs to appear and violence to take place. Within a few minutes nine Muslims and one Hindu were stabbed and some cases of arson were reported. At nearly the same time trouble broke out in two other localities. A victoria carrying three Muslims and one Hindu was held up, its occupants were brutally murdered and burnt. Thereafter the trouble spread to the usual localities. On this day there were 93 stabbing cases, six cases of arson, one of crude bomb and 5 of looting. In all 51 persons were killed and 124 persons were injured. The police opened fire on twenty occasions. In all 104 rounds were fired, injuring twelve persons including one woman who died later. On the next day 19 stabbing cases occurred of which seven proved fatal. There were also three cases of arson. Rigorous measures have been taken and the Military have been out since March 30th but have not yet come into action.

In Ahmedabad also the communal situation deteriorated on March 30th and there were two bomb incidents on that day, injuring three persons, and two stabbing cases on the next day.

Communal relations are still strained in Mahad, Mangaon and Roha Talukas of the Kolaba District and there have been occasional outbursts, though of a minor nature, namely, a masjid, a hay stack and a house were set on fire and two dargas and an idol were damaged. Also small

incidents which took place in Panvel during the Holi festival on March 6th, such as stealing of grass and the burning of a cart have soured communal relations in that taluka.

At Malegoan in the Nasik District a clash occurred between Nationalist Muslims and Muslim Leaguers on March 23rd, when the former enraged by provocative speeches abusing Congress leaders, attacked a meeting of the latter with lathis and stones. As a result some persons were injured. The situation there is under control and no further incident has taken place....

2. Report from Bombay Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bombay for First Half of June 1947, 18 June 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/6/47, NAI.

....3. *Communal*.—The communal situation in Bombay City continued to give anxiety. A few stray cases of stabbing and minor incidents of assault, acid and stone-throwing were reported. The total number of casualties from the 30th March to the 15th June is 119 persons dead and 286 persons injured. During this period 1,276 persons were rounded up and 1,861 were arrested for breach of prohibitory orders. Collective fines amounting to Rs 19,700 were imposed on several localities.

There were a few incidents in the districts also. In Ahmedabad City, a small crude bomb was thrown on a mosque, but it did not explode. A collective fine of Rs 5,000 has been imposed in connection with this incident. In Kaira District, a serious Hindu-Muslim clash occurred at Sarsa over the question of playing music before a mosque and as a result 20 persons were injured one of whom died subsequently. In retaliation, some mischief-mongers of Bhalej attempted to set fire to a local temple but only a few steps of the wooden staircase were burnt. This situation at these two places, though tense, is well in hand. In Sholapur City six persons were stabbed on the 14th June, one of whom died. In Kolaba District, the newly introduced custom of performing 'Satyanarayan Puja' near a mosque at Neral led to a fracas between some Hindus and Muslims. As a result, a Muslim boy was slightly injured. The matter has, however, been amicably settled and the situation there is now quiet. With the approach of the monsoon, the social boycott imposed by Hindus on Muslims in Mahad, Mangoan and Roha talukas is gradually relaxing and communal tension in these talukas has considerably eased. However, there was a set-back in the situation in Mahad Taluka as a result of non-communal murders of two Gujars at Birwadi on the 5th of June. There was also some tension at Uran due to a small fight which took place between the imported Kachhi labourers and the local Hindus over the use of a well. The tension at these places is easing and the situation is now quiet.

Inter-Communal.—Some Caste Hindus and Harijans in Bombay City resorted to throwing of stones and sodawater bottles at each other and the police were forced to open fire on two occasions to disperse them. In all five rounds were fired as a result of which two Harijans were injured. The Caste Hindus also stabbed a Harijan and threw a bulb containing acid at a Harijan woman who received minor burns....



D. CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR

1. Crimes Committed by Hindus of Jubbulpore Town

Extracts from a Letter from M.M. Burhanul Haq to R.S. Shukla, Undated [March 1947]

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I. pp. 469–70.

Jubbulpore

We are constrained and compelled to bring to your notice that aggressions of very heinous and criminal type are being committed by the Hindus of Jubbulpore Town. You have repeatedly and with vociferous voice on platforms and in press announced that you would take strong measures [against those] who would commit acts of violence [and that] you would do your best to suppress it and would not spare any community who takes the law into its own hands.

2. You have imposed Punitive Police Tax upon the Muslims at Burhanpur very recently because some trifling injuries are said to have been caused to some individual Hindus. You also did not spare this town of Burhanpur even in your days of Ministry in 1939. You also immediately, within a week, levied this Police Punitive Tax on 24.3.1939 against the Muslims of Biswa Chandore because one Congressman was alleged to have been murdered by Muslims, which was not found to be a fact later on by the court of law and you had to return back [*sic*] the amounts of Punitive Tax to the persons from whom it was collected.

3. All these measures, it seems, were only for the Muslim community and not for the Hindus. With what difficulty we are maintaining peace in Jubbulpore, you have no idea of it. Your Congress Government is meant only, it seems, to find fault with the Muslims by taxing [*sic* for imposing] the Punitive Tax only on the Muslim community. Though there were many aggressions in your days of previous government at Jubbulpore in which lives of Muslims were lost [*sic*] by the Hindus but you never levied the Punitive Tax against the Hindus who were ever the aggressors at Jubbulpore.

4. If you really mean what you say for the strong measures against the community, we want to bring to your notice that at Jubbulpore, on 1.3.1947, one Hindu, under a conspiracy, assaulted with a dagger four Muslims and one of them has succumbed to the injuries. This locality is a purely Hindu locality from Kamania Gate to Nimbard Ganj. These four fatal assaults were made during the day in a business locality, within a distance of two furlongs, completely populated by the Hindu community. The assailant was not even caught, when he continuously committed the assaults by dagger, by the Hindu community. This proves how far the Hindus are aggressors in the matter.

5. We approached, in a deputation, the District Magistrate of Jubbulpore to press upon him [the need] to take strong measures, like Punitive Tax, against the members of the aggressive community. He only laughed and by-passed [*sic*] us. It seems that he is here only to protect the Hindus and not the Muslims because he may be thinking that his masters belong to the aggressive community.

6. The result of this, by not taking strong measures against the Hindus, is that another brutal assault was made on the night of 18th March 1947 at about 10 p.m. on the *PeshImam* Hafiz Qudrat Ali Siddiqui of the Jehangirabad Mosque at Jubbulpore. This place is also in a Hindu locality. It is just close to the *gurdwara* of the Sikhs. The assailants are most coward *goondas* of the Hindu community, who, timidly, under a conspiracy, assaulted a religious head of the

Muslims. It is very difficult, even for the Police, to trace out the assailants because the assault is made under the conspiracy of the Hindu community.

7. If you are true to your word and mean what you say, you would be pleased to take strong measures against the aggressors of the Hindu community of the locality concerned so that the contagion may not spread into a conflagration. If it happens so, you and your Congress Government will be responsible for it.

M.M. Burhanul Haq
MLA

President

City and District Muslim League

Hon'ble Mr Shukla
Premier, CP and Berar
Nagpur

2. Report from CP and Berar

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on CP and Berar for Second Half of April 1947,
6 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.

....2. *Communal*.—There was a communal clash in Jubbulpore town on the 24th of April, the result of a petty quarrel between a few Rashtriya Sewak Sangh youths and some Muslims boys in which two Muslims were attacked with lathis and stones. Later in the day, a Hindu cyclist who had nothing to do with the affair earlier in the day was knocked down and stabbed in the stomach; he died shortly afterwards.

There was another sudden outbreak of stabbing in Jubbulpore on the 28th, when four persons were stabbed, 3 Hindus and one Muslim, and one Muslim was hit with a lathi. Special precautions were immediately taken and a curfew was imposed. Orders under section 144 were promulgated prohibiting meetings and processions. The Goondas Act was enforced and 38 goondas were ordered to report themselves to the Police. Fortunately there were no repercussions as leaders of both communities spared no pains in helping in the maintenance of public order.

The murder of two members of a Kunjda (Muslim) family in a suburb of Saugor, although apparently due to private enmity and had no communal significance, caused widespread panic in Saugor town. All possible precautions were taken and the city has since returned to normal, except for stray cases of stone throwing which continue to occur at night.

Although there is calm on the surface, there is an undercurrent of tension and nervousness, some of it at least being due to the occurrences in the Punjab and the Frontier, which is likely to break out at unexpected places and in unexpected moments. This nervousness sometimes finds expression in unfounded rumours which are likely to cause further trouble. For instance, in the Drug [*sic*] district it was rumoured that the Hindus were getting together arms and quantities of sulphuric acid to attack the Muslims; again in the Sihora tahsil of the Jubbulpore district it was alleged that daggers and other weapons were being clandestinely prepared by Muslims for a general attack on Hindus. Peace Committees have been formed to trace these rumours to their source and deal with them. The two most prominent leaders of the Muslim League,

namely, Syed Abdur Rauf Shah and Maulana Burhanul Haq are co-operating whole-heartedly with the authorities in maintaining communal peace. Except for these isolated incidents, the communal situation continues on the whole to be satisfactory....

E. DELHI

1. Communal Trouble in Delhi

Letter from W. Christie to A.E. Porter, 24 March 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 5/7/47, NAI.

D.O. No. 307 ST/CC
Delhi

Chief Commissioner
Delhi

My dear Porter,

As verbally reported to you last night, communal trouble arose yesterday afternoon as a result of some Sikhs in a jeep and a lorry accidentally injuring some Muslims near the Juma Masjid just before the Pakistan Day meeting was due to start. This resulted in a communal fracas in that area and also another incident opposite the Gurdwara in the Chandni Chowk. The serious casualties of yesterday were two dead and four injured, though a few with minor injuries were also treated, but not admitted to hospital. A curfew was imposed by the District Magistrate from yesterday afternoon until 7 a.m. this morning and had the desired effect of preventing further incidents throughout the night, but there have been some more scattered over the city this morning and the casualties up to the time of writing (noon) are five injured today. The District Magistrate has imposed the curfew from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. for a week, has prohibited meetings for a fortnight, searches for knives, spears and other weapons are being successfully carried out and generally all precautions are being taken to prevent the trouble increasing or spreading. A pre-censorship order on communal riot news has also been issued by the District Magistrate and I have asked him to let me have a copy of it at once for submission to the Government of India for review as desired by the Government of India in connection with orders issued under the new Press Emergency Powers Ordinance.

2. The military were in position in the city in support of the civil power on account of yesterday being Pakistan Day, but to the best of my knowledge they have not so far had to be used to suppress any of the incidents.

Yours sincerely,
W. Christie

A.E. Porter, Esq CSI, CIE, ICS,
Secretary to the Govt of India,
Home Department, New Delhi.



2. Report from Delhi

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Delhi for the Second Half of March 1947,
5 April 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.

...*Communal*. The grave disturbances in the Punjab had the inevitable result of heightening very dangerously the communal tension in Delhi. Refugees from the Punjab brought harrowing tales of atrocities and accounts in the press, particularly those from the special correspondents of the various papers, had a bad effect on the morale of people. The determination of the Muslim League to celebrate Pakistan Day on the 23rd March, as usual, had, therefore, even more than usual the prospect of trouble and that happened in spite of elaborate police and military arrangements. The sober right wing elements in the Muslim League were also anxious that there should be no disturbance of the peace and in that connection they had had to resist strongly their left wing. Unfortunately the Sikhs had begun parading about the city in jeeps and lorries armed with their large kirpans and the trouble started when one such jeep full of Sikhs followed by a lorry full of Sikhs, collided with a Muslim cyclist in front of the Jama Masjid. Clashes and stabbings continued for several days, but, thanks to the police and military precautions and the prompt imposition of the curfew no serious clashes took place after the first day. Five people were killed and thirty-five injured during the disturbances and there were also a few cases of arson. Before these disturbances broke out the Sikhs have been making elaborate defensive and offensive preparations and had sought the assistance of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh which, however, declined to associate itself officially with the Sikhs. Since the disturbances broke, the Sikhs have been less aggressive as they have been somewhat concerned to find that they are being generally blamed for the beginning of the trouble.

A regrettable feature is that the public of Delhi have followed the public of the Punjab in alleging communalism amongst the Police. The complaints by the Muslims are mainly against Sikh police officers more than against Hindu police officers, and the Sikhs, on the other hand, complain against Muslim Police officers. The right of Sikhs to carry kirpans even during times of disturbances is greatly resented by the Muslims when they themselves are prevented by the orders under section 144 CrPC from carrying any arms, and even lathis.

The last two days have been free from any incidents but communal feelings are only suppressed as a result of the control imposed and if that control be relaxed they will inevitably break out again.

The serious communal disturbances in the rural area of Gurgaon have caused a good deal of alarm amongst the villagers in the southern portion of the district, but steps have been taken to reassure the people in that area....

3. Report from Delhi

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Delhi for the First Half of April 1947, 19 April 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.

...*Communal*. The communal situation showed some improvement during the fortnight, but it has been necessary to continue the curfew at night owing to continuation of astray assaults. The total casualties upto the end of the period under report were 10 killed and 46 injured.

The disturbances in Gurgaon caused the situation in the rural areas to deteriorate and there were several occasions when rumours and panic nearly led to disturbances. Refugees from the Punjab also contributed to the prevailing alarm with their tales of suffering and loss, but a large number of them are now returning to their homes and the situation is consequently easing.

The Muslims have continued their propaganda against the carrying of kirpans by Sikhs. The extremist elements in the Muslim National Guards and the Bazm-i-Pakistan have been inciting Muslims to disarm the Sikhs forcibly and have been endeavouring to work up a movement to secure for the Muslims the right to carry swords. The administration in general and the Hindu and Sikh police officers in particular have been attacked by a number of Muslim speakers who allege that they have been pursuing an anti-Muslim policy. On the other hand, Sikhs and Hindus allege communalism by Muslim officers and in such conditions it is difficult to maintain unity and the morale of the forces.

There has been considerable excitement amongst the Muslims in connection with the cartoon entitled 'Mohammad goes to the Mount' which was published in the Hindustan Times last month. The apology published by the editor of the Hindustan Times has not been regarded as satisfactory by the Muslims, and an application has been made on behalf of the Muslims for the necessary permission to launch a prosecution.

Some objectionable speeches have recently been made in the Arya Samaj meetings where speakers have condemned Pakistan and criticized Congress leaders for their alleged appeasement of the Muslim League.

During the fortnight nationalist Muslims held a series of inconclusive meetings at some of which Allama Mashriqi, the leader of the Khaksars, was present. The object was to form a united Muslim front, but they have met with little success as their approach to Mr Jinnah did not have the result expected and there are also serious differences amongst them as to their correct policy in the present situation.

There has been considerable activity amongst the Sikhs not only in connection with the demand for the partition of the Punjab, but also as a counter to the Muslim propaganda against the carrying of kirpans. They have threatened serious consequences, if their right to carry kirpans should be withdrawn. On the other hand, there have been complaints amongst them of insufficient support financially or otherwise from rich Sikhs. Only two volunteers from Delhi could be found to go to Amritsar to take a pledge of service to the Panth in response to Master Tara Singh's appeal. ...

4. Communal Trouble in Delhi

Letter from W. Christie to A.E. Porter, 25 April 1947
Home Poll (I), File. No. 5/7/47, NAI.

Chief Commissioner, Delhi
D.C. No. 430 ST/CC

Delhi

My dear Porter,

As there has been a recrudescence of communal trouble in the city in the last two days, as I mentioned to you personally yesterday afternoon, I think I had better recommence sending you a daily report until the matter subsides again. This report covers the 23rd and 24th instant.

2. No untoward incident occurred on the night of the 22/23rd instant and the shops opened as usual on the 23rd, but for no apparent reason 5 incidents took place that afternoon in Sadar Bazar, which is a very troublesome communal area, but which had been kept more or less free of incidents since the present trouble began on the 23rd March 1947. In addition to the 5 incidents in Sadar Bazar, a Muslim was found badly stabbed near Talkatora gardens, New Delhi on the 23rd morning and the Muslim of the mosque on the top of the Ridge in Civil Lines, Delhi was stabbed that evening. Both died. A 24-hour curfew was imposed in the Sadar Bazar area from yesterday morning, but between the lifting of the previous night's curfew and the imposition of the 24-hour curfew, 9 more incidents occurred in that area and 4 more occurred in other areas during the day as a result of which a 24-hour curfew has been imposed in the Bazar Sita Ram area also.

3. The casualties so far are as follows:

23rd instant. 3 Muslims killed and 1 Muslim and 3 Hindus injured; total 3 killed and 4 injured.
 24th instant. 2 Muslims, 2 Hindus and 1 Sikh killed and 3 Muslims and 5 Hindus injured; total 5 killed and 8 injured.

The total number of casualties since the trouble began on the 23rd March 1947 are as follows:

	<i>Muslims</i>	<i>Hindus</i>	<i>Sikhs</i>	<i>Total</i>
Killed	15	6	1	22
Injured	28	35	4	67

None of these casualties have been caused by police or military action.

4. Searches and arrests have continued on an extensive scale.

Yours sincerely,
 W. Christie

A.E. Porter, Esq, CSI, CIE, ICS,
 Secretary to the Govt of India,
 Home Department, New Delhi

5. Measures to Check Communal Rioting

Resolution Passed by the Central Government Muslim Employees' Association, 25 April 1947
 Home Poll (I), File No. 5/7/47, NAI.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT MUSLIM EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION NEW DELHI RESOLUTION

At a general meeting of the Central Government Muslim Employees' Association held in New Delhi on Friday the 25th April 1947 the following resolution was passed:

'In view of the cowardly murderous attacks on peaceful citizens of New Delhi, which has all these years been free from disturbances of any kind, particularly in the areas occupied by Government servants the insecurity of the life and property of these servants and their families

caused thereby and the insufficiency and incompetency of the police in apprehending the culprits, this general meeting of the Central Government Muslim Employees' Association resolve that—

1. The Honourable the Home Member be requested to take the following measures for their safety:
 - (a) All those who have been imported into New Delhi after the Punjab disturbances and who are residing in Government quarters, Gurdwaras, temples and other places in New Delhi should be ordered to vacate these premises forthwith as they are a menace to the peace and tranquility of the city.
 - (b) As the possession of kirpans by members of one community affords a direct encouragement for their use on the unarmed members of the other communities, as evidenced by incidents which have already taken place in New Delhi, every citizen should also be allowed to keep swords for self-defence.
 - (c) Till action on (a) above is taken armed pickets should be posted in the areas of Gurdwaras and temples in New Delhi where these imported people are residing.
 - (d) Effective arrangements should be made for catching culprits who use automobile vehicles in kidnapping lonely passersby.
 - (e) Armed police and military, which should include an adequate representation of the Muslim community, should be deputed to petrol [*sic*] the areas occupied by Government servants.
2. The Honourable Member for Works, Mines and Power be requested to allot immediately compact blocks to the Muslim staff, reserving the Minto Road area for them.'

Copy forwarded to the Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Member, Home Department, New Delhi.

6. Culprits Must Be Apprehended

Secretary, Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Delhi, to the Home Member Forwarding a Copy of a Resolution Passed by the Sikhs of Delhi, 27 April 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 5/7/47, NAI.

This largely attended weekly gathering (Dewan) of the Sikhs held in Gurdwara Sisganj, Delhi on Sunday the 27th April, 1947 hears and views with regret the dastardly act of 15 or 20 Muslim brutes who mercilessly butchered S. Mohan Singh, overseer at Pul Bangash Delhi on 23.4.1947 and severely condemns the action of those goondas. This Dewan requests the authorities to apprehend the culprits and to punish them according to law. The Dewan also appeals to the Government to impose a punitive fine of at least of Rs 5,00,000 on the Muslim residents of that Ilaqa and to pay the recovered fine as compensation and damages to the unfortunate widow and infant child of the deceased. In view of the continued assaults on Sikhs at Pul Bangash during the last 8 or 9 months the Sikhs also request the Government to post a permanent armed military picket at Pul Bangash at the cost of the Muslim residents of the Ilaqa.

This Dewan requests the authorities to try that Muslim Police Officer for abetment of murder who saw the incident happening and inspite of S. Mohan Singh folding his hands in an appeal for help, went away in his lorry scornfully smiling. The Officer and his companion

policemen should be summarily dismissed from service and the severest possible punishment awarded to them.

This Dewan sends heart-felt condolence of all the Sikhs of Delhi to the bereaved family and prays to God the Almighty to give peace to the soul of the Shaheed, to give power to the members of the bereaved family to stand this shock and to give the Sikh Sangat light and power to check such brutalities in future.

7. Political Nature of the Communal Disturbances

Letter from W. Christie to A.E. Porter, 28 April 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 5/7/47, NAI.

Chief Commissioner

Delhi

Delhi

My dear Porter,

I am sorry that as I had other engagements all Saturday morning I was unable to get a report to you then on the communal situation. This report, therefore, covers Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

2. Friday was quiet, but on Saturday morning there were again a number of incidents in various areas such as the Nicholson garden in Civil Lines, Sadar Bazar, Kotwali, Lal Kuan and near the Irwin Hospital. They were all stabbing cases except for one near the Irwin Hospital where a Muslim youth, said to be the son of one of the officials of Rampur, who had run away from Rampur after having stolen his father's revolver, shot at and wounded a Sikh. The two stories differ as to whether the boy first shot at the Sikhs, of whom there were three or four or whether the Sikhs attacked the boy first, but the boy is under arrest.

3. As a result of the various incidents that day 1 Muslim was killed and 3 Muslims, 2 Hindus and 1 Sikh were injured, a total of 1 killed and 6 injured, bringing the total to 24 killed and 72 injured.

4. Yesterday was quiet until the evening when another stabbing incident occurred in Police Station Hauz Qazi where a Hindu was attacked by two Muslims, and a Muslim was found fatally stabbed on Kingsway in Civil Lines.

5. Three Muslims previously injured by stabbing died yesterday.

6. Yesterday's casualties were 1 Muslim killed and 1 Hindu injured plus 3 Muslims died of injuries previously sustained, bringing the total casualties to 20 Muslims, 7 Hindus and 1 Sikh killed and 28 Muslims, 37 Hindus and 5 Sikhs injured, a total of 28 killed and 70 injured.

7. Stringent curfew orders have had to be maintained in the worst affected parts of the city, and arrests and searches are going on. Excluding arrests merely for violation of the curfew and other orders under section 144 CrPC, the arrests so far made are:

	<i>Muslims</i>	<i>Hindus</i>	<i>Sikhs</i>	<i>Total</i>
U/S 107/151, CrPC	248	289	15	552
U/Ss of the IPC	37	5	13	55

8. The Senior Superintendent of Police reports that the carrying of kirpans, which are really full-sized swords, by Sikhs has become a real menace to the city. He says that almost all the

murders and cases u/s 307, IPC in which Muslims are the victims, are very reasonably suspected, and in some cases actually known to have been caused by Sikhs with their kirpans. This is, to some extent, borne out by the casualty figures mentioned above as it will be seen that out of 48 Muslim casualties practically all of which were stabbings, 20 have died, whereas out of 44 Hindu casualties, also mostly stabbings, only 7 have died, and out of 6 Sikhs casualties 1 has died. The proportion of deaths in the case of Muslims is very high and the only assumption to draw in the circumstances is that the injuries are in a large majority of their cases, done by these large swords.

9. Although the above is the position it is difficult to see what remedy can be enforced. The only remedy would be either to prohibit kirpans or limit their size to miniature ones of an inch or two, but an attempt to do either, particularly unilaterally for Delhi, would almost certainly only make matters worse as the Sikhs would openly resist any such order and jathas of Sikhs from the Punjab would be sent to Delhi to defy the order.

On the other hand, the insistent Muslim demand for permission for them to carry swords so long as the Sikhs are permitted to carry kirpans is equally impossible in present conditions as it would just lead to wholesale slaughter.

10. The main difficulty in putting down these present communal disturbances, as compared with communal disturbances in the past, is that they are linked to no specific occasion. In the past one knew that certain religious festivals were likely to result in communal outbursts but once these outbursts had been got under control, conditions usually rapidly returned to normal and remained so until some other religious festival. Now the outbreaks of communal disturbances are connected with no religious festival but are predominantly political and there is no saying how or when they will ultimately be stopped. They can temporarily be suppressed by force but that is no cure.

Yours sincerely,
W. Christie

A.E. Porter, Esq CSI, CIE, ICS,
Secretary to the Govt of India,
Home Department, New Delhi.

8. 'Malik's Peace Appeal to Hindu & Sikh Leaders'

Dawn, 7 May 1947.

In a statement issued on Tuesday from Delhi Mr D.M. Malik, Chairman of the Ad-Hoc Committee of the Delhi Provincial Muslim League appeals to the Hindu and Sikh leaders of Delhi to put their heads together and pool all their resources for the restoration of normal and peaceful conditions in the town.

He says: That the tragic events which have been taking place in Delhi for the last one and a half months have resulted in enormous loss of life and property to the people of Delhi, irrespective of their religion or political views.

As a result of these events which must be painful to every peace-loving citizen, the social and economic fabric of the city has been torn to pieces, entailing enormous hardship and suffering to all the people.

It will be no exaggeration to say that in the first City of India today no one feels secure even in the precincts of his house. This is a state of affairs, which I am constrained to say has

disgraced the fair name of Delhi, which has been for centuries past not only the seat of the Government but also the centre of what may rightly be called Indian civilization.

That such a state of affairs should exist in Delhi, when the administration is completely in the hands of a Government in which all the political parties are represented is really deplorable.

It is all the more so because at this particular moment, the top most leaders of all the communities are in Delhi for negotiations with the Viceroy for a final and peaceful transfer of power to Indian hands.

I make bold to say that the law of the jungle which has prevailed for some time past does not help any political party in gaining its objectives and the realization of this fact must now be obvious to all concerned.

Why then should such ugly happenings continue to disfigure the fair name of this ancient city which by virtue of its present and past history should have been the model for emulation for the rest of the country?

Let, therefore, the leaders of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs sit together, join their hands and pool all their resources to restore the glory that was Delhi.

9. Representation Protesting against the Highhandedness of Delhi Police

Letter from Secretary, Hindu Sahayata Samiti, to the Home Member, 9 May 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 5/7/47, NAI.

The Hon'ble Home Member
New Delhi

Sir,

A representation with signatures of over one lakh citizens (including Municipal Commissioners, Mir-Mohallas, Advocates, Doctors, Professors, great businessmen and others) of Delhi has been sent to the District Magistrate of Delhi protesting against the highhanded and repressive policy of Police against innocent Hindus in general and RSS (a peace loving organization) in particular, making it and its members as the special target. The representation is on the next page.

Yours respectfully,
Secretary

ENCLOSURE

The District Magistrate,
Delhi

Sir,

We the Hindus of Delhi beg to bring to your kind notice something which needs your immediate and serious attention.

While complaints have already been made to you in several ways by the representatives of the Hindus that the Police in the course of the disturbances in Delhi has made indiscriminate arrests of a very large number of Hindus in the various localities of Delhi and in doing so has also harassed them and in some cases even entered their houses in the absence of the male members and thereby interfered with their privacy. We note with great concern that the RSS,

has now come in for special attention and attack by the Police. In this connection we may particularly draw your attention to the arrest of five persons of the Sangh recently made in the Civil Lines. These five persons are absolutely innocent yet the Police by arresting them is making every effort to implicate them. Again another arrest of a prominent member of Sangh has been made in Karol Bagh and the allegation is that his Motor cycle was seen several times moving about the city, a strange logic. It is how the Police has now directed its attention towards the Sangh. They have also searched the various offices of the Sangh and yet they have not found even a trace of anything incriminating. The Sangh as it is very well known to everybody who has followed its activities, since its inception has stood for the peaceful uplift of the Hindus. It inculcates among them spirit of brotherhood, sacrifice and service to make them good citizens and since the time it has started, it has never taken any part in any subversive or unlawful activities and yet it is simply strange to find, and which is perhaps due to the lying and poisonous propaganda carried on by the Muslim Press, that it is now in the bad books of the Government for no fault of its own.

Whereas we find everyday the Muslim National Guards parading in the streets with their Jeep, Uniform Dress and their flags, inciting Musalmans and organizing them. We also find them carrying on Parade and what is more perplexing is that on certain occasions they have also been found in large numbers in the District Courts holding their Parades, shouting slogans and then above all when their very creed stands for violence and terrorizing the Hindus and Sikhs, why is it that no action so far has been taken against them. In fact, it is their Organization and their propaganda that have been entirely responsible for all this atmosphere in the city as well as outside. In many places where searches have been made, arms of various kinds are said to have been discovered. Even their women in Burkas are working and yet the Police as well as the other local authorities have not taken any strong and organized step against them.

We, therefore, beg to submit that the authorities should show impartiality and fairness in their dealings. Otherwise if this state of affairs is allowed to continue and we the Hindus suffer, we may frankly inform you that it would have serious repercussions.

10. Report from Delhi

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Delhi for the First Half of May 1947, 19 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI.

My dear Banerjee,

This is my fortnightly report for the first half of May, 1947.

Political and communal. The departure of Lord Ismay, Chief of Staff of His Excellency the Viceroy, to London with the Viceroy's report on his discussions with political leaders caused great interest and much speculation and so has the subsequent announcement of His Excellency's own hurried visit to London prior to the Conference with political leaders on 2nd June. His Excellency's own visit to London has, however, given rise to renewed hopes that something in the nature of a settlement between the main political parties, even if it only be on some, if not on all, major issues, may still be achieved. On the other hand, the conflicting claims of the Muslims for the whole of the Punjab and of the Hindus and Sikhs for the partition of that province have created a situation which is fraught with danger and it is generally felt that as soon as the announcement is made on the 2nd of June, rioting will break out on a large scale

in a number of districts, if it has not already broken out before that. The recent recrudescence of serious trouble in Amritsar and Lahore has caused considerable alarm in Delhi, but it has not been unexpected. Meantime, it is obvious that the younger elements in particular in the main youth organizations of the three communities mainly concerned—Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs—are busy secretly preparing themselves for a savage civil war. Everyone who can get a licence for a fire-arm is prepared to pay fabulous sums for a weapon. It is unlikely that the announcement which will be made on the 2nd of June can please all the three communities concerned and, therefore, there is very real danger that it may be the signal for a further serious conflagration.

As a counter to the Sikh and Hindu propaganda for the division of the Punjab, the Muslim League has been demanding the inclusion of Delhi in Pakistan. The temporary Provincial Muslim League Committee is setting up sub-committees and mohalla committees to protect the interests of Muslims in cases arising out of the past disturbances and any future emergencies which may arise. The demand for the right of Muslims to carry swords is still being pressed and some of the extremist elements wish unconstitutional action taken to enforce the demand.

The Sikh leaders have been concentrating on trying to have one Sikh Volunteer Corps in place of numerous small bodies of Sikhs which exist at present; the new organization to be known as Shahidi Dal. More attention has been attracted however by rival organizations known as the National Volunteer Corps. Sikhs have also demanded the abolition of purdah owing to the recent arrest of a Muslim woman at the Delhi Railway Station carrying knives under her burqa.

The All India Dharam Sangh has continued its agitation on behalf of orthodox Hinduism with the aid of reinforcements from outside, and batches of sadhus have courted arrest daily in New Delhi by demonstrating in front of the houses of some Honourable Members, the Viceroy's House, Council House etc. Few Hindus not directly concerned with the agitation have shown any inclination to support this movement.

The supporters of the Bengal Council of Action for the partition of Bengal also courted arrest on one occasion in New Delhi to draw attention to their demands and they threatened civil disobediences in Delhi if the statement be made on the 2nd of June does not promise the partition of Bengal. ...

11. Measures to Deal with Communal Disturbances in Delhi

Letter from R.N. Banerjee to W. Christie, 5 June 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 5/58/47, NAI.

D.O. No. 42-47/PA
Home Department
New Delhi

My dear Christie,

Will you please refer to your Top Secret demi-official letter No. 674-ST/CC dated the 26th May 1947 about measures taken for dealing with communal disturbances?

2. I am desired to say that Government regret that they are unable to agree to the indefinite continuance of Hony Magistrates whose removal has been decided on. Orders on this subject are, however, issuing separately.

3. I am also to request you to make up the deficiency in the present strength of the police with the least possible delay. In filling existing and future vacancies you should keep in view the main objective of mitigating communal maladjustment and, in order to achieve it, you should take in more non-Muslims in the first place until the population ratio is faithfully reflected in the composition of the Police Force. From this point of view Government do not regard as satisfactory the recruitment of 75 Hindus and Sikhs and 38 Muslims during the last three months.

4. I am also desired to add that the question of the recruitment of 200 ex-soldiers and of the application of the UP Ordinance to Delhi should be pursued separately. You should, therefore, send us formal proposals setting out in greater detail your case for recruitment of ex-soldiers and for the application of the UP Ordinance.

Yours sincerely,
R.N. Banerjee

W. Christie, Esq, CSI, CIE, MC, ICS,
Chief Commissioner,
Delhi.

F. NWFP

1. Political and Communal Situation in the Frontier

Minutes of Viceroy's Third Miscellaneous Meeting, 16 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 196A, NMML.

SITUATION IN THE NWFP

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY read out a telegram which had been received over the telephone during dinner, reporting rioting, looting and arson in Dera Ismail Khan. He said that he thought it would be a good opportunity, while all those present were in the house for a dinner party that they should discuss whether there was anything which could be done to ease the situation in the Province.

SIR OLAF CAROE said that he intended to see General Messervy at Rawalpindi on his way back the next day. He thought that the report might perhaps be rather alarmist, but if troubles spread to the rural areas then it would be a serious affair. A telegram on the previous day had said that half the city was burnt and this was very unfortunate, as it was the wealthiest city in the Frontier Province, a big centre of trade and had suffered very little from communal trouble in recent years. The last occasion was 1939 and previous to that in 1931, and on each occasion part of the bazaar had been burnt. He added that the population of the city was roughly 50–50 Muslim–Hindu, but that it was swollen during the winter months by tribesmen up to a number of say, 150,000 who came down to trade from as far as Afghanistan.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY asked if Sir Olaf Caroe would give a brief description of the situation in the NWFP. He said he felt sure that everyone would agree that at the present time, just before he hoped to make a recommendation to HMG about the final hand-over of power, it would be particularly unfortunate if the NWFP went the same way as the Punjab and became reft with communal trouble.

SIR OLAF CAROE explained that the trouble was caused by a Muslim League movement against the Government in the Province. He thought there was no substance at all in their complaints, but a number of excuses had been found to start trouble. The recent disturbances have, for example, been caused largely by the enforced conversion of a young woman and her transfer from one village to another. After her husband and father had been murdered, she was remarried to a Muslim and forced to embrace Islam. Finally she was brought to Peshawar City for protective custody where it was clear from the statement she made before a District Magistrate and in the presence of her new husband, that she wished to return to her relations from whom she had been removed by force. This case had been made into a bitter outcry against the Provincial Government and an excuse for civil disobedience on a large scale. More trouble had been caused after the burning of villages and collective fines which had been introduced in the Hazara district. Other excuses have been found to cause trouble and civil disobedience with the result that nearly all the Opposition Party in the Government [*sic*] and a large number of their supporters, have been arrested and were in jail.

SIR OLAF CAROE said that at the last election the votes between the two sections of Muslims in the Province had been almost equal but in his opinion there had been a swing against the present Government in the last twelve months. The movement against the Government now had, he felt, much behind it and although the tribes had been quiet up to the present they were busy organizing themselves on a scale which he had not seen in all his experience in the Frontier.

The tribes were taking a keen interest in the NWFP and were saying that the present set-up there was unsatisfactory and should cease, but SIR OLAF CAROE said that he had told them that that was no business of theirs. They were undoubtedly excited by the happenings in the various districts, but although they opposed the present set-up, they did not wish to join in trouble on a communal basis. In fact, the Afridis made it quite clear at a recent Jirga that they would not have the Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly visiting them until Congress and the Muslim League had considered their differences and the Committee was fully representative of an united India.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY asked whether these were their own genuine opinions, or whether these thoughts had been put into the heads of the tribes by others.

SIR OLAF CAROE said he was sure that tribes held these opinions honestly and he had told them he would forward them to the proper quarter. PANDIT NEHRU said that the Advisory Committee referred to was dealing with widely different subjects and there was no question of the Committee going to the NWFP at present as it was obviously undesirable in the present state of affairs.

MR. LIAQUAT ALI KHAN said that he felt that the trouble in the NWFP and elsewhere was due to the fact that HMG had announced that they would hand over power in June 1948 without making a definite decision to whom power was to be handed over: the result was there was bound to be discord between the parties and that each would do their utmost to be in power in the Province when the terminal date was reached.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said this endorsed his view that there was not a moment to lose and that an early recommendation to HMG about the final turn-over of power was essential. He hoped that the decision would be acceptable to all parties and would prevent bloodshed in the future. In the meantime it was essential to avoid any further trouble in India. He felt

that Sir Olaf Caroe had the most difficult job of all the Governors at the present time and he was anxious to send him back to his Province with some constructive advice and a firm policy which might be carried out during the crucial period of the next 6 to 8 weeks.

SIR OLAF CAROE said that he had considered recently whether it would be possible to hold elections in the NWFP at an early date. He was of the opinion that they could be held under the control of the present Government with the idea of giving it a fresh mandate or of finding an alternative Government. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that elections could not take place immediately, but would have to wait until after he had made his recommendations to HMG.

PANDIT NEHRU agreed that the elections would probably cause some disturbances if they were held now, but it was desirable to obtain the views of the people before the final turn-over of power was effected. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY thought that it might be helpful if the Governor issued a statement of such sort on his return to the Province. SIR OLAF CAROE agreed but thought it would be unnecessary to mention when the elections would take place or to say anything about the mechanics of carrying out the elections; he thought that the mere fact of announcing that elections would take place would be sufficient to ease the tension.

MR. LIAQUAT ALI KHAN thought that when elections were held, the authority in power at the time must be completely neutral. He thought it most undesirable that there should be one single party in power at the time of the elections. Possibly the Governor, who of course was completely impartial, could have the responsibility.

PANDIT NEHRU thought that impartial elections could be conducted by the permanent officials rather than by the Governor. He said that the proposal by Mr Liaquat Ali Khan meant in fact that the Government should be dismissed and that the Governor should take over control under Section 93. He thought that this was not helpful, would not result in impartial elections and would undoubtedly be bitterly resented.

SIR OLAF CAROE thought it was by no means necessary to go into Section 93 and drew attention to the Punjab elections early in 1946 when a Unionist Government was in power and were in effect practically swept out of existence. He thought, however, there were certain things which must undoubtedly be put right before elections were held and he added that one of the Governor's special responsibilities was to see that the elections were conducted in a perfectly fair manner.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he did not think it was necessary to decide now the mechanics of carrying out the elections. He was much opposed to the Governor going into Section 93 and he suggested it might be possible to ensure fair elections by additional officials and observers being drafted to the Province. He asked whether the leaders present would be in agreement with him if the Governor was authorized to say on his return, that after the recommendation had been made to HMG about the transfer of power and before the transfer of power had been effected, elections would be held in the NWFP.

MR LIAQUAT ALI KHAN said that all that he wanted to make clear was that it must be fully understood that the machinery for the elections would be such that they would be held without any interference from anyone else. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he agreed but he was most anxious to avoid bringing in Section 93. PANDIT NEHRU said that he did not think, in view of the present situation in the NWFP that it should be announced at the present time

that elections would be held. It would appear if such an announcement were made that the Provincial Government's hand had been forced by the agitations that were taking place.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY thought that a statement might be linked not only with the Governors' Conference, but with the statement which had just been issued denouncing violence. It might take the form of saying that at a suitable moment fresh elections would be held. MR. LIAQUAT ALI KHAN said that before elections were held it was essential to give an indication of the authorities to whom power would finally be transferred. Then would be the time to hold impartial and fair elections to ascertain the views of the electorate on their future. SIR OLAF CAROE thought that it would be possible to hold elections this summer, but that a start should be made now on the revision of the Electoral Rolls.

Some discussion then took place on the Pir of Manki. SIR OLAF CAROE said that he had advised his Chief Minister against his arrest and the Prime Minister had agreed. The Pir of Manki was undoubtedly the most sincere and the best leader of the Opposition. For a time he had confined his activities to normal Opposition tactics but when he announced he would hold a procession in Peshawar and demonstrate outside the jail he (Sir Olaf Caroe) had told the Prime Minister that he should consider carefully whether the time had now come for his arrest, in which case he would not stand in his way; and so he was arrested.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY suggested that the Pir of Manki might be released if it was agreed that a statement of the type which they had been discussing was issued. PANDIT NEHRU, however, thought this would have a bad effect and that he should not be released until the Opposition movement which he controlled had entirely ceased their activities.

SIR OLAF CAROE pointed out that the arrest of the Pir of Manki had had a great effect among the tribes who had been holding Jirgas and calling for his release. In fact, there was remarkable tribal unity being shown against the Government in this respect. He did not think that the Pir of Manki had been stirring up trouble or violence although since his arrest his followers had undoubtedly been doing so, but this was because he was not there to guide them. PANDIT NEHRU did not entirely agree with this and said that they had had evidence that the Pir of Manki had advocated methods other than peaceful ones, and had been inciting his followers to violence. SIR OLAF CAROE said that the Pir of Manki preachings had been directed almost entirely to the tribes and although they had been organizing to an unprecedented extent and holding Jirgas, they had so far not committed themselves to hostilities. In all his 25 years at the Frontier, he never remembered such feeling being displayed by the tribes. He considered that the Pir of Manki was an organizer and not an agitator and that any suggestion to the contrary was unfair to him. In fact, before he was arrested he had said that the movement would fail if it indulged in violence. He had very little doubt that if the Pir of Manki was released he would bring influence to bear to promote communal harmony.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that nothing which had been said by Sir Olaf Caroe had given the impression that the latter wanted to do anything but ensure peaceful conditions in the Province. In fact, he thought that the object at present must be not to hold elections, but to ensure a return to settled conditions, with a view to turning over the NWFP as peacefully as possible. He thought that the Government had failed in allowing such a state of turmoil to develop in the Province. It made the holding of elections in present circumstances unfair to either side. In fact, SIR OLAF CAROE said that he would not be prepared to forecast which side would win the elections at the present time.

PANDIT NEHRU said that he was sure that people who had come to see him from the NWFP were arrested on their return. The Governor expressed disbelief of this and said it would be unwise to listen to stories of this type. PANDIT NEHRU agreed that it was impossible to rely entirely on telegrams and letters, but they did give an indication of feeling in the Province. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that his own personal opinion was that the Pir of Manki should be released and that possibly he might be bound over to keep the peace, but he realized that the Provincial Government must decide the question of his release.

SIR OLAF CAROE said that administration in the NWFP was nearing the breaking point. The jails were all full at present and it was very difficult to retain control. He was attempting to deal with processions by using the minimum of force and great restraint had been exercised by the troops. The procedure was to arrest say 5 or 6 from each procession and persuade the remainder to disperse. Outside the cities there had not been much trouble except in the Hazara district where there was long standing communal antagonism which had lasted for the past 100 years. SIR OLAF CAROE said that he thought the solution might be to call off all processions although there could be no ban on meetings. But he felt that the greatest anodyne would be the proposed announcement that elections would be held, and that this must be coupled with a renewal of constitutional processes.

LORD ISMAY said that, as there seemed to be general agreement that some sort of statement should be issued, he had attempted to draft something and he read out what he had in mind. It was generally agreed that this would form a basis for further action.

After a discussion on the military situation in the NWFP, HE the Commander-in-Chief left the meeting.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY read out a further telegram No. I2O-CB of 16th April which had just been received about the situation in DIK. He said that he thought that a statement on the lines proposed was essential. PANDIT NEHRU thought that any statement about fresh elections which was issued now would obviously be linked with the disturbances at DIK and would be interpreted as a success for the Opposition movement. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he quite saw Pandit Nehru's point, but thought that the statement might be linked with the recent Governors' Conference and with his assumption of the Viceroyalty three weeks ago. It might be possible to lay the emphasis on these two points and to take care not to associate the statement with the present situation. In fact he thought that now was the ideal time to issue such a statement. He thought Sir Olaf Caroe should go back to his Province and send for his Chief Minister at once. He should describe the talks he had had here and say that the Viceroy told him that no elections could be held while there were the present disturbances and the situation would have to quieten down first. He said that he did not think that he could send Sir Olaf Caroe back without any instructions and sit here himself doing nothing.

After further discussion it was agreed that Lord Ismay should draft a statement on the lines of the discussion during the meeting and that it should be considered by His Excellency the Viceroy in consultation with Pandit Nehru, Mr Liaquat Ali Khan and Sardar Baldev Singh at a short meeting before the Defence Committee Meeting on the next day.

(It was subsequently decided that Sir Olaf Caroe should not return at once to the NWFP but that Dr Khan Sahib should be flown to Delhi on 17th April for discussions with His Excellency the Viceroy, Pandit Nehru and the Governor).



2. 'Half of the City of Dera Ismail Burnt'

The Tribune, 17 April 1947.

Peshawar, April 16.—Half the city of Dera Ismail Khan is burnt, according to information reaching Peshawar this evening.

The fires which started yesterday are reported to be under control now. The total number of casualties now is 10 killed and 22 injured.

It is reported that attempts at arson were made in Tank also.

The Frontier Government issued a communiqué at 2 p.m. which said that some of the fires which started yesterday were still burning. Extensive damage has been caused to the city, said the communiqué.

Troops are patrolling to-day. The situation this morning was stated to be under control.

Qazi Attaulla Khan, Revenue Minister and Mr Mehr Chand Khanna, Finance and Information Minister have reached Dera Ismail Khan by air.

It is understood they will return to Peshawar tonight.

Last night the village of Paron, near Dera Ismail Khan, was raided by unknown offenders, who indulged in arson and looting, says the communiqué.

It is understood three persons were killed in Paron and 21 shops and houses were burnt. Fires are still raging in the village.—API.

3. Report from NWFP

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on North West Frontier Province for the First Half of April 1947, 18 April 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.

...2. *Political and Communal*—The Muslim League agitation has continued without any noticeable change in method, although in most Districts there was a decrease of intensity partly owing to the harvest season. Communal tension has also continued, and there have been one or two unpleasant incidents. The worst was an attack on a train near Kohat on April 2nd by men in Muslim League uniforms who boarded the train at Kohat and at a distance of 17 miles from Kohat killed seven Hindus and injured 13. A man and woman are still missing. There have been stray murders in Peshawar City and Kohat and bomb explosions in Nowshera and Kohat. Hindus and Sikhs have continued to leave the Province in large numbers. On the 14th April the Bombay Express left Peshawar Cantonment Station when a procession of women was sitting on the railway line about a mile away. They refused to leave and the train failed to stop with the result that 4 women were injured. The fact that the driver was a Hindu was spread abroad; and immediately after the incident there were various attempts at arson on Hindu property in Peshawar City. Fortunately not much damage was done except to a Cinema. In Dera Ismail Khan one Punjabi agitator and one local Muslim League leader made highly provocative speeches on the 14th evening. As the result of this rioting with arson and looting broke out on the 15th morning. Further reports are awaited at the time of writing.

It has been necessary on a number of occasions to make lathi charges and to use tear gas in Peshawar City. On April 8th several hundred Afridis marched down the Kohat Pass towards the Peshawar District apparently with the intention of demonstration on behalf of the Pir of Manki. They were turned back by the Political Tahsildar, Kohat. On April 14th about 120

Swathis entrained at Dargai for Nowshera before they could be intercepted. They demonstrated with others in Nowshera and then went on to Peshawar. On the whole, however, the news from the Tribal Areas is that, while generally sympathizing with the Muslim League, there is no present intention of disturbing the peace of the settled Districts.

The Red Shirts left Peshawar City on the evening of April 7th. No serious incident had taken place during their stay. There have, however, been minor clashes between Red Shirts and Muslim League sympathizers in Kohat District; and Congress meetings in Mardan District have several times been greeted with hostile demonstrations.

Hazara District has been kept comparatively peaceful only by the most rigid control in all the towns and by the use of road blocks. On April 9th a crowd, which had previously agreed to disperse, suddenly stoned the car in which the Assistant Commissioner had gone to meet them. Later the Deputy Commissioner with a party of troops was also heavily stoned when going to arrest the culprits in a village, and twenty rounds had to be fired, no casualties being inflicted, before the situation was brought under control....

4. 'Bannu City Sniped from Outside'

The Tribune, 20 April 1947.

Peshawar, April 19.—The Frontier Government issued the following communiqué this evening on the situation in the province:

'Some houses and shops in Tank are still burning and reports have come in of further trouble from the outlying villages of the district. The Revenue and Divisional Commissioner, NWFP, flew to Tank to-day to study arrangements for tackling the difficult refugee problem, which has been created. The Commissioner returned to Peshawar in the afternoon.

Cases of forcible conversion are reported from several villages, including Kalagor, Dhalla, Rodikhel and Mandra. Twenty-four casualties are reported from these villages and a number of persons have been kidnapped.

Bannu city was sniped from outside last night. The police and Frontier Constabulary who were in the "Morchas" returned the fire. Strong security measures have been taken today and troops are patrolling around the city area.

Two persons were wounded by shooting in Peshawar City to-day.

Earlier messages said:

The latest reports from Dera Ismail Khan describe the situation in Dera Ismail Khan tehsil as still serious. It is stated that some villages are involved in the trouble. In Tank town 1,500 refugees have been removed to police stations and other places of safety in the town. Colonel Mallam, Revenue Commissioner, Frontier Province has been sent to look after these refugees.

In view of the fact that some Powindhas, who were on their way to Afghanistan are alleged to have taken part in arson, looting and murder in D.I. Khan. It is understood that Government are contemplating to have some hostages from the Powindhas for their good behavior during their stay in the Frontier Province.

The main railway line near Cunningham Park between Peshawar Contonment and Peshawar City measuring one foot was found damaged early yesterday morning. There was no serious dislocation but the traffic was delayed for about one hour till the line was repaired.

Bannu City was sniped at last night from outside the perimeter wall. The Frontier Constabulary and police returned fire. There was no casualty. The city remained quiet but tense yesterday, and the city gates were kept closed as a precautionary measure against mischief-mongers.

One Hindu is reported to have been shot in Peshawar Cantt. yesterday.

From Hazara, information states that the local authorities have extended the curfew period for another week from 9 p.m. to 5.30 a.m.'

5. 'Dera Ismail Khan Quiet—Villages in Distress'

The Tribune, 21 April 1947.

Peshawar, April, 20.—The Frontier Government's last evening's announcement about the release of political prisoners in the Frontier jails was described as a 'friendly gesture in response to the recent Gandhi—Jinnah appeal' by Dr Khan Sahib, the Frontier Premier, today at a press conference, where three other Ministers of the Frontier Cabinet—Mr Mehr Chand Khanna, Qazi Attaullah Khan and Khan Yahya Khan were also present.

The Premier appealed to the press to help Government in creating a peaceful and conciliatory atmosphere in the province.

Dr Khan Sahib added: 'The Government has taken the opportunity to help the people of this province to bring about peaceful and healthy atmosphere in the Frontier and for that purpose they thought it necessary to release the political prisoners and thus help in bringing about actual goodwill and understanding. We hope our honest and sincere efforts will bring about good results.'

The Premier revealed that there were about four to five thousand political prisoners in the Frontier jails. The release of these prisoners in places like Peshawar would begin soon while the release of others in southern districts would follow as soon as conditions permit.

Describing the latest situation in Dera Ismail Khan district, Dr Khan Sahib stated that the city was quiet there were some reports from certain villages and Government was taking measures to stop the trouble there. Kulachi was also quiet. The Pawindhas, an Afghan migratory tribe took a leading part in the disturbances in Dera Ismail Khan and the Government was taking measures to find out and punish the culprits. The Government proposed to check all Pawindhas en route to Afghanistan at the border and would make thorough searches before they were permitted to leave for Afghanistan.—API.

6. Tribal Jirga Held at Mirali

Report of the Intelligence Bureau, H.D., 22 April 1947

External Affairs Deptt, File No. 9(71) NWA/47, NAI.

Secret

Copy of ISI Directorate No. 7074/NC/D of I/ISCI(ii) (a) dated 22nd April, 1947.

With reference to the civil intelligence report that a jirga held at MIRALI had passed a resolution to the effect that the time for a holy war had come, HQ Northern Command report that Peshawar Intelligence Bureau has given the following additional information:

The Jirga, held at Mirali on 20 April, was addressed by the Faqir of Shewa, Mohd Jan Khan (Madda Khel) and representatives from the Karbogha and Bhattani families.

The Jirga, not fully representative, consisted of 400 Wazirs and Dauras from the following sub tribes, Bhaka Khel, Jani Khel, Mohd Khel, Sparkai, Tori Khel, Madda Khel and Dauras.

Pakistan was discussed and it was decided that, as the Congress Ministry had not resigned, Tribesmen were free to take any action they wished against non-Muslims. It was agreed that tribes

should not obstruct any gangs from moving through their territory, if they did, then the tribe concerned would have Rs 500 'Konra' taken from it. It was decided that a fully representative Jirga of all the frontier tribes would be held at MAIDAN in TIRAH (Afridi territory) on 15 May '47. The Jirga had neither the support nor blessing of the Faqir of Ipi, who ordered his lieutenants that they were not to attend.

2. HQ Northern Command, in commenting on the report, state that as a result of the resolutions passed raiding by gangs may increase in intensity; in fact, gangs have already started moving towards Bannu and there is panic in the city. There is little likelihood, however, of the situation assuming abnormal proportions until the results of the Jirga to be held on the 15 May are known. At present there are little or no indications of a Jihad.

Forwarded for information in continuation of this Bureau's u/o No. 41/D.G./47, dated 15-4-47.

(W.F.M. Davies)
Assistant Director (F)

7. Communal Rioting in Rawalpindi

Note by Edwina Mountbatten to Louis Mountbatten, 25 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 84A, NMML.

The following is a precis of a conversation which Rajkumari Amrit Kaur had with my P.A. Miss Watson as I was unable myself to see her when she asked to come and talk with me. It is however following on other talks I have had with Rajkumari Amrit Kaur on similar matters which did not seem specific enough to put up to you.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur a few days ago received a deputation of Hindus who came to see her from Rawalpindi and Mooltan and was very much concerned by what they told her. They were remnants of families who had mostly been wiped out (revolting details described) and many of the girls abducted. They had told her that even when it was known in which house these girls were, the remaining relatives were prevented from getting access by the police, whom she said were 80 per cent Muslim. The Military could take no helpful action because they were under the police. She inferred pretty clearly that appeal to higher British officials (it was gathered non-military) met with the attitude 'You want the British to go, and this is the result which you will have to cope with yourselves'. She has written to the Governor of the Punjab about this and suggested that Indian officials who are neither Hindu nor Muslim should be brought in from outside the Province to help deal with the situation.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was personally very upset and evidently fully believed all the deputation had told her, though she did not know them personally.

8. League Must Withdraw Their Policy of Violence

Extract from the Viceroy's Eighth Miscellaneous Meeting, 25 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File 96A, NMML.

ITEM 1 THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY asked Sardar Patel what he thought of Mr Jinnah's appeal, issued that day, to his supporters in the North West Frontier Province to maintain law and order.

Sardar PATEL said that, in his frank opinion, he disliked it intensely, because it involved His Excellency. He went on to give his own account of how the troubles in the North West Frontier Province had started. The parents of a Sikh girl, he said, had been murdered; she had been forcibly converted and married to a Muslim; but had eventually come back and been given protection in Dr Khan Sahib's own house. The Muslim League had passed a resolution demanding her return to them. The story of the other cause of the present troubles, Sardar PATEL claimed, had started with the Government of India, at the instigation of the Government of the NWFP, imposing a fine on some tribes which had kidnapped an officer. This fine had been paid after a time and a second resolution of the Muslim League had been that the fine should be refunded. The Muslim League said that they were fighting for civil liberties—but no-one had denied them these. Now Mr Jinnah was asking that the disorders should stop 'because The Viceroy would give justice'. But what injustice had there been?

Sardar PATEL then quoted from a military intelligence report a sentence to the effect that the situation, though improving elsewhere, was tense in Peshawar because of Mr Nishtar's visit and a speech by Malik Feroze Khan Noon, who had said that the Congress Ministry would be out in a week.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY pointed out that this speech had been made before (or simultaneously with) Mr Jinnah's statement, in a far distant place, so could not be considered to have been co-ordinated with it.

Sardar Patel said that, if any violence by the Congress Government of the North West Frontier Province could be proved, he would hold himself personally responsible. But, unless the Muslim League withdrew their Direct Action threat, there would be a disaster. He added that he appreciated the efforts the Viceroy was making.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that Mr Jinnah had explained to him that the Direct Action resolution had never been passed by the Muslim League. Direct Action Day, on the 16th August 1946 had only been for them to consider a programme if Direct Action was to become necessary. He went on to say that he intended to see at Peshawar not only Dr Khan Sahib but also the Muslim League leaders. To the latter he would make it clear that it was his policy to support properly constituted Governments, and that he would use force against the Muslim League if their disturbances continued. It might become necessary to order fresh elections, but he would explain that he did not propose to consider such a step while the Muslim League behaved as they were now doing.

On the suggestion that the present Government did not command the support of the electorate, Sardar PATEL stated that, in the one bye-election which had recently taken place in the NWFP, the Muslim League majority had dropped considerably.

9. Muslim League Plans to Carry Out a Demonstration

Extracts from a Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten, 26 April 1947
SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 249–52.

New Delhi

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

I would invite your attention to the Report of the Director of Intelligence (No. 108 Summary of Communal Incidents for 25 April 1947), a copy of which your office must have received

from the Director of Intelligence. It appears that the Muslim League plan a demonstration on the day of your arrival in Peshawar, and that the reaction to the Government's announcement regarding the release of political prisoners has been unfavourable.

2. This is further confirmed by the report of the Deputy Director, Intelligence, Peshawar, dated 24 April 1947, which has also been sent by the DIB to your office and which contains the news that the Pir of Manki is reported to have informed a crowd of 500 / 600 which had collected outside the police lines that the political prisoners were not going to agree to the decision taken by the Government and that the civil disobedience campaign should continue with the same vigour.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE I

SECRET

HQ INDIA COMMAND

(DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE)

NO. 108 SUMMARY OF COMMUNAL INCIDENTS FOR 25 APRIL 1947

(Up to 0900 hrs 25 April 1947)

COMMUNAL DISTURBANCES

SITUATION IN NWFP

According to reports from HQ Northern Command and Peshawar Area dated 24 April 1947, there has been increased Muslim League activity in Peshawar and Abbottabad. The situation in the rest of the province is quieter. The following was reported:

(a) Peshawar:

The civil intelligence sources in Peshawar in a report dated 24 April 1947 state that on the occasion of the celebration of Martyrs' Day a crowd of over 40,000 persons assembled. The report adds that the Muslim League plan a demonstration on the day of the arrival of the Viceroy.

(b) Abbottabad:

The reaction to the Government's announcement regarding the release of political prisoners has been unfavourable. The Muslim League's civil disobedience has intensified and processions have increased in number. Section 144 has been imposed for a further fortnight from 22 April. Several women climbed the wall of Haripur Jail and planted the Muslim League flag. There have been three cases of attempted arson in Abbottabad. One company [4 Dogras] stood to in unit lines from 0800 hrs 23 April at 15 mins. notice.

(c) Dera Ismail Khan:

It is now confirmed that casualties, as a result of the Hindu refugees being ambushed at Parola (19 miles South of DIK), where one constable and eight Hindus [were] killed and one constable and eighteen Hindus [were] wounded. It is believed that a gang of Mahsuds was responsible. Reports are also being received that hostile gangs are moving in the direction of Bannu, possibly as a result of the directions of the Muslim League jirga held at Mirali on 20 April....

10. Communal Situation in NWFP

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten, 26th April 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 321–3.

New Delhi

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

I am writing to you with some hesitation as I have nothing really new to put before you. But I am worried about the state of affairs round about D.I. Khan as well as the continuation of the aggressive activities of the Muslim League in the Frontier.

I had hoped that after the Gandhi—Jinnah appeal there would be a withdrawal of these movements. That might not have resulted in complete cessation of all aggressive activities but it would have had a powerful effect. There has been no such indication of stopping the movement and indeed there is an attempt to intensify it in the hope of forcing Government to take some action, which it otherwise might not do. That action, it is clearly stated, is resignation of the Ministry and an announcement of elections. Recent statements by prominent members of the Muslim League, including Members of the Interim Government, have been disquieting and in some cases very tendentious.

I greatly fear that if this kind of thing goes on there will be reaction on the other side. In any event to permit the continuation of these tactics to bring down the Ministry is likely to lead to very harmful results. These activities are being continued because it is hoped they will yield results soon. As soon as it is realized that they will not yield the results desired, they will gradually end. I am anxious therefore that there should be absolutely no misapprehension in this matter and that it should be made perfectly clear that such activities will not be allowed to influence events. Any kind of democratic Government would otherwise be impossible. What has happened in the Punjab will be repeated in a far more intense and dangerous form in the Frontier.

This I think is correct, whatever the appraisal of the present situation in the Frontier. In regard to that appraisal opinions may perhaps differ, but it is clear that a little more than a year ago the identical issues that are being raised today were raised at the time of the elections. The only real test of public feeling after a general election is a by-election. There has been one by-election recently in the Frontier. This was in regard to a Muslim League seat. It was retained by the Muslim League but by a much reduced majority. Indeed they came near losing it.

There is considerable danger in our misjudging the situation because of lots of violence and shouting. The people who support the Government do not and cannot indulge in unconstitutional and illegal activities. They have therefore to remain quiet while others do the shouting. On the 23rd March the Frontier Province celebrates 'Martyrs' Day' on a very big scale annually. This is a special day for the Red Shirts. In order to avoid any breach of the peace they called this celebration off. Immediately the Muslim League decided to demonstrate on that day.

It might interest you to know that in the United Provinces from 30 to 35 per cent of the total votes cast in separate Muslim constituencies were against the Muslim League candidates. Nevertheless by the luck of the election a far larger proportion of Muslim League candidates won. We have to accept that fact according to democratic procedure although we know that a considerable number of the Muslim electorate is against the Muslim League demands in the UP. Only five days ago I attended a vast gathering in a typically Muslim area of the UP.

There were over 100,000 persons present at a Conference and a great number of these were Muslims, who had indeed taken considerable part in organizing that Conference.

I mention this fact to show that various totalitarian claims made may not be justified and this business of trying to decide political issues by threats of violence must not be allowed to influence our judgement of the situation. I am quite clear in my mind that the first thing to be done is to put a stop to this violence and to the policy underlying this violence. Nobody can have a grievance when it is admitted that decisions will be made without compulsion. Violence breeds violence as it has done in India and if once it is made clear that violent tactics pay, then the belief in peaceful methods will fade away.

I have been getting a large number of telegrams from D.I. Khan. I suppose you have got them too. People from D.I. Khan who live in Delhi are naturally very greatly agitated at what has happened and what is happening there. They cannot get any news, they cannot go there except by air. Attempts to charter planes have failed. It was our desire to send two or three competent observers there who could at least cheer up the people in their sufferings and send us a report of the present state of affairs. An attempt is still being made to arrange this.

I am afraid this letter is a very inconclusive and inconsequential one. You need not trouble to reply to it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. Deliberate Policy of Violence Increases Communal Feeling

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten, 1 May 1947

SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 324–6.

New Delhi

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Thank you for your letter of the 30th April which I received last evening. I am grateful to you for your courtesy in sending me reports of the conversations you had during your visit to the Frontier.

2. The impressions you have gathered may, no doubt, be justified by what you saw and heard. Possibly, if you had had time and occasion to see more, you might have had some additional impressions which might have helped in arriving at a truer appreciation of the situation.

3. There can be little doubt that there is an upsurge of communal feeling. That requires no proof for the very fact of murder and arson on a large scale is proof enough. There is also little doubt that recent events, and more specially what has been happening in the Frontier Province itself, have affected the Tribes. While they have been so affected, it is difficult to say what the various divisions of feeling among them may be after reference to one or two grounds only. Undoubtedly the situation is an explosive one.

4. The first impression that one gathers from recent happenings in the Frontier is that gangster methods pay and that a deliberate policy of murder, arson, and loot, of the most revolting kind, yields results. That is a most depressing thought.

5. Last night I received a report about certain conditions in the Frontier from Dewan Chaman Lal, MLA, who was good enough to visit Peshawar and D.I. Khan at my request. This report brings out some other aspects of the situation. In particular it deals with the troubles in

D.I. Khan and how repeated attempts by the Deputy Commissioner to prevent any mishap and to control the situation when trouble started were foiled by the Superintendent of Police and the Additional Superintendent of Police. The Deputy Commissioner's orders were completely ignored. The charges made are very serious not only from the administrative point of view but because of the consequences that took place in D.I. Khan and the neighbourhood.

6. I feel reluctant to go into any details about the happenings in the Frontier Province not only because exaggerated and excited versions are put forward by rival groups, but also because I have a feeling that this is not a question of facts but of an approach to the problem. The major fact that stands out is of a deliberate policy being followed by the Muslim League in the NWFP, a policy which has had the most ghastly results in human suffering. That policy is openly being pursued still and threats are held out of worse consequences. I have received information of a speech delivered by a colleague of mine in the Interim Government in Hazara District commending the Muslim League adherents for what they have done and encouraging them to continue such activities. Hazara has been a horror not easy to parallel.

7. In the course of your conversations in Peshawar it would appear that the Ministry there was in the dock and had to defend itself. Little, if anything at all, is said about the Muslim League agitation and its results and the continuing policy that has been pursued by it.

8. It would be absurd to say that all that has happened in the NWFP is due to the machinations of the Governor and his officials. But I have little doubt in my mind that the Governor and some of his officials are responsible in many ways for the present situation. As I have previously informed you, it is my clear opinion that the Governor is completely unfit for the responsible position he holds. He has neither the capacity nor the impartiality to deal with it. This applies also to certain officials in Waziristan. I find it increasingly difficult to continue to be in charge of a Department which is responsible in some way for the activities of officials who function wrongly and are completely beyond my control.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. Report from NWFP

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on NWFP for the Second Half of April 1947,
2 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.

.... 2. *Political and Communal*.—The Muslim League campaign against the Ministry continued in most Districts on about the same scale as during the first half of the month; but there was a tendency to increase intensity in Peshawar City, which reached its climax on April 28th, on which day HE the Viceroy arrived. The general appeal for peace by Mr Gandhi and Mr Jinnah did not seem to have much effect on the rank and file of the party, though it was bound to influence the leaders to some extent; and it was re-inforced by Mr Jinnah's own appeal for peace in the province during His Excellency's visit. Even so tension was extremely high on that day, and would have been even higher but for the decision of the Congress party not to hold any simultaneous demonstration. Estimates of the crowd which assembled, and which was seen by His Excellency, vary, considerably, but the number was probably not below fifty thousand. Ultimately it dispersed without any serious incident having taken place and the subsequent days have been relatively quiet.

On the 23rd of April also, which is annually celebrated as Martyrs Day in Peshawar City, matters reached a critical pitch and serious trouble was only averted by the prompt action of the authorities in enforcing a curfew early in the afternoon. On this occasion also the decision of the Congress party to refrain from what is traditionally their own celebration was a very important contributory factor to the avoidance of trouble.

The general picture has been one of processions, demonstrations, picketing and interference with the running of trains, accompanied by lathi-charges, the use of tear gas, and the arrest of a substantial number of people. Occasional murders of Hindus and Sikhs, apart from the more serious communal trouble described below, bomb explosions by night in and around Peshawar City, cutting of telegraph lines, and sabotage on a small scale of road bridges and railways have all contributed to maintain an atmosphere of uneasiness every where and of fear in the case of the minorities. One serious outrage took place on the night of April 28th, when unknown culprits from outside the perimeter wire threw three bombs on to the house of the General Officer Commanding, Peshawar Area, and fired a number of shots into the house itself.

The Jails are now filled to overflowing and the political prisoners have frequently resorted to turbulent acts, particularly in Haripur. The Provincial Government's announcement on April 19th of a general amnesty for all those not charged with crimes of violence was not accepted by the Muslim League, and the diminution of the Jail population thereafter has been negligible. It remains to be seen whether consultations by Muslim League leaders on this subject will lead to more satisfactory results. If not, very vigorous measures will be necessary to restore order in the Jails, apart from those already taken from time to time to deal with particular outbreaks of trouble.

The District of Dera Ismail Khan has seen disturbances unprecedented in this province. The trouble began on the evening of April 14th with inflammatory speeches to a large audience. Minor violent incidents on the following morning rapidly led to general communal rioting which continued until 16th April. The situation was only brought fully under control with military aid on the 17th April. Casualties of all communities amounted to 18 killed and 45 wounded, the latter including 11 policemen. About 900 shops were destroyed by fire and number of important Government buildings and private houses. The trouble spread rapidly to Tank, where the dead ultimately numbered 33 including 17 Mahsuds who had been attracted by the hope of loot. Most of Tank City has been destroyed by fire. Numerous other villages in the District witnessed outbreaks of communal disorder on varying scales, and full figures of casualties and damages are not yet known. Much of the trouble was caused by migrant Powindas. An outstanding crime was an attack on April 22nd on a convoy of lorries evacuating members of minority communities to Dera Ismail Khan from Paroa. In this 10 persons were killed and 18 wounded. Since then a measure of peace has returned to the District following the re-inforcement of the civil Armed Forces on the spot, the countryside by mixed columns. The most successful counter measure up-to-date followed an attack on Kulachi on the night of April 28th by a Tribal gang. The attack was repulsed by the police and Frontier Constabulary on the spot. The gang were met some miles away by a mixed force of Frontier Constabulary and military. And they were met yet again near the Tribal Border by a force of South Waziristan Scouts. Total casualties to the gang were 6 killed, 2 wounded and 19 taken prisoner.

The neighbouring District of Bannu, being forewarned has so far escaped similar tragedies. But the City has remained in a constant state of anxiety, behind locked gates, with commercial and Government business almost at a stand-still. Tribal gangs have constantly menaced the City and the smaller towns of the District, and worse might have occurred but for the prompt

action of the political authorities in North Waziristan in arresting on April 24th 400 Mahsuds who were on their way to the plains for mischief....

13. Frontier Minority Faces Communal Insanity

Letter from Prem Das to J.B. Kripalani, 1 June 1947

AICC Papers, File No. G-14/1946-47, NMML.

D.I. Khan

My dear Acharya Ji,

Namaskar. You must have read in the press that DI Khan Hindus and Sikhs have altogether been ruined on account of communal madness and nothing has left with them to live upon. They are wandering from place to place but no Congress Government of any province dare to give them shelter. What is wanted is a government which can rule both at the centre and in the province. If the Central Government had acted strongly then Noakhali, Punjab and NWFP would not have been possible. The Government particularly in this province is weak and its officials are not co-operating with it. The result is that both Hindus and Sikhs are being made victims. The Congress High Command should be well warned. The way in which these onslaughts on Hindus and Sikhs are being overlooked is shaking up the whole country. It should not be forgotten that in its fight of liberty the main support has come from the Hindus. No body wants the Congress to disregard the interest of others, but this does not mean that the Congress should sacrifice thousands of Hindu Lives and Billions of Hindu Money in trying to placate a Community which refuses to have any truck with the Congress and openly proclaims itself to be an alien nation. This kind of thing is creating a lot of discontent among the Hindus greatly and they may lose faith in the Congress. Then the Congress will lose its main support and will release new forces which may unsettle the whole future. Then the dreams of a socialistic or democratic or powerful India may disappear and India may again lapsed [*sic*] into anarchy or go into a new subjection.

Would you kindly, therefore, place the case of Frontier Minority before the Congress High Command and save it from further ruin.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Prem Das [illegible]
Chhota Bazar, D.I. Khan

14. 'Islam Never Preached Killing of Helpless and Slaughter of Women and Children'

The Tribune, 10 June 1947.

(From our own correspondent)

PESHAWAR, June 9.—Khan Amir Mohd Khan, President, Frontier Provincial Congress Committee, has issued the following statement:

'I wonder if Mr Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League, was at all serious in characterizing the League agitation in the Frontier as a movement of peaceful civil disobedience in his broadcast speech on the 3rd June from the All-India Radio. I am sure he must have

blushed while uttering these words as the statement was glaringly incorrect. The League agitation in the Frontier can by no stretch of imagination be either called peaceful or civil. During the last few months his followers were responsible for murders of hundreds of men, women and children and forcible conversions of a large number of them. Property worth crores of rupees was destroyed through loot and arson, which caused untold misery to a section of the population of this province. The nature of agitation has been purely communal which struck terror and awe into the minds of all those who had no means of defending themselves.

‘At this time the question of civil liberties as is often alleged by him and his followers was never involved. Whether in Hazara, Mardan, Peshawar, Kohat or DI Khan the initiative was taken by the Leaguers. It was only after they indulged in acts of violence, loot, arson and murder that certain preventive measures were taken and those too were enforced in a half hearted manner and with an unwilling mind. Our grouse against the Provincial Government has been that they always became wiser after the event. If prompt and proper action had been taken—and I fully appreciate the difficulties of the Provincial Government—much of the killing, stabbing and shooting could have been avoided. Instead of paying tribute to the people, who are guilty of acts of such shameful and dastardly nature, it was expected of Mr Jinnah to have condemned them in unqualified and unequivocal terms.

‘If such is going to be the foretaste of Pakistan to be set up in NWFP, I pray to God that He may save our province from this catastrophe. I am a Mussalman and know the teachings of Islam. At no time Islam preached killing of the helpless and slaughter of women and children.’

15. Congress Has Failed to Protect Hindus and Sikhs

Press Statement by All-India Hindu Mahasabha and Central Hindu–Sikh Minority Protection Board, 20 June 1947
AIHM Papers, File No. C–165, NMML.

From Gandhiji’s post-prayer speeches regarding NWFP and reports of Abdul Ghaffar Khan Jinnah meetings it has now become clear that the Congress has ultimately surrendered and [*sic*] North Western Frontier Province to Pakistan. It is really sad to note that the surrender has been effected after the Hindu and Sikh minorities in that province and [*sic*] had undergone great sufferings, trials and tribulations in the recent devastation caused by the Muslim League in their Direct Action movement. Leave of Sir Olaf Caroe does not offer any satisfaction or consolation after he had done sufficient harm to the minorities there either by not checking the Muslim League atrocities or instigating them.

The Congress Government in that province completely failed to give any protection to the Hindus and Sikhs but deceived them into false sense of security which resulted into a complete annihilation without any resistance from within or any sympathy from outside. When Behar Government is offering Rs 1000 per capita as compensation to the sufferers, the Frontier Government has not come forward to give any help to them. Even the Hindu majority provinces and their Governments have not given any substantial help to the refugees. When Government of Bengal has spent one crore of rupees on refugees of Bihar the UP Government has very generously given only Rs 5000 to the refugees at Hardwar.

Now when sufficient harm has been done to the Hindus Gandhiji has come forward to preach establishment of separate Pathanistan for the protection on [*sic*] Pushto language and Pathan culture, who could protect the culture and language of Hindus we asked.

We, hereby, demand from the powers that be that sufficient compensation be given to every Hindu and Sikh who want to stay in NWFP. The compensation should never be less than Rs 1,000 per head if not more and all the loss they have suffered should be fully compensated. No separate sovereignty state be established unless arrangements for colonizing the minorities in safety zones which shall have to be created in the province, are made....

G. PUNJAB

1. Mahasabha Leaders Visit Riot-affected Areas

Extract from a Report by Hindu Mahasabha Leaders, 23-6 March 1947
AIHM Papers, File No. C-154, NMML.

PUNJAB TOUR

Mr L.B. Bhopatkar, President, and Syt Ashutosh Lahiry, General Secretary, All India Hindu Mahasabha, left by Air for Lahore on Punjab tour on 23rd March last. It may be remembered that Punjab Government imposed a ban on their entry and when the President intimated the Governor by telegram that they would defy the ban to vindicate the self-respect of the Hindu Mahasabha the Governor's Secretary wired him on the 20th instant intimating the withdrawal of the ban. They arrived at Lahore at about 9 a.m.... The President was profusely garlanded and they were taken to the house of Dr Gokul Chand Narang, where they put up. Sometimes after at about 10-30 a.m. they toured round the devastated areas in Lahore city and returned at about 1 o' clock. At 2 o' clock they left by car for Amritsar along with Dr Gokul Chand Narang. Reached there at about 3 p.m. They met Captain Keshab Chandra and discussed with him the various questions about relief and rescue work. They then made an exhaustive tour along with Captain Sahib the areas devastated during the riots. They found a part of the city about one-tenth of the whole city utterly ruined. The havoc and devastation caused gave the impression as if the whole area had been bombed by the planes. In the heart of the business quarters they found one street about half a mile in length and second one of equal length so completely devastated that it was difficult to penetrate into the roads. Numerous three or four storied buildings had topped down and they had to walk on heaps of ruined materials with considerable difficulty. The houses mostly belonged to the Hindus but the shops mostly belonged to the Moslems. Syt Lahiry expressed the opinion that nothing like this had occurred in Calcutta even during the worse days in the great Calcutta killing. About 10 crores of rupees properties have been lost of which 8 crores belong to the Moslem and seven crores belong to the Hindus and Sikhs. Loss of lives are almost equal. They were entertained with Tea at the House of Captain Keshab Chandra then motored back to Lahore reaching there at 6 p.m....

...A large number of Hindu Students of DAV College, SD College and other colleges had assembled in the spacious compound of Dr Narang's house in order to listen to the President. In his absence, however, Syt Lahiry addressed them for an hour dwelling at length on the various implications of the present political situation created by British Cabinet declaration to quit India by June, 1948, and also by the campaign of organized measure, loot, arson and abduction of the Hindus in various parts of the country by the agents of the Moslem League. He specially appealed to the young-men to organize units of strength throughout the country as in future those who are strong and capable of holding their own against the rising tide of the Moslem aggressiveness will, alone survive and dominate over India. All old conceptions and

political programmes have now become obadite and Hindus must think in terms of new vision which imposes a very heavy responsibility on the shoulders of the youths of the country....

The following morning the President met continuous streams of people pouring in for personal talks with him and at 9 p.m. he, accompanied by Sjt Lahiry went round the city again and for three hours visited numerous houses amongst crinzy lanes and bye lanes of the old city area, which bore marks of the depredations of the police. Most of the houses were riddled with bullets and their walls, doors roofs and window panes bore overwhelming evidence of the vandalism that the Police caused actuated by communal frenzy. They visited particularly the house of Sree Balkishen, the General Secretary of Hindu Sabha Forward Bloc and a most stout fighter and resister who was shot down by the police in his own house. He was a brave young man and the President advised that proper steps should be taken for enshrining the memory of such heroic soul. They then visited the house of a young lad of 16 years of age who was lying grievously injured in his house and who though received several sword-cuts in his hand refused to part with the Hindu Mahasabha flag which he held firmly in his hand till the last. His life was, however, saved miraculously. The President had to ascend several times the upper floors of many three or four storied buildings for inspecting the bullet marks and the havocs created....

In the evening at 6.30 p.m. a meeting of Hindu Mahasabha workers took place in the Hindu Sabha Bhawan at Shah Alim Gate. About fifty workers were present including the members of the Hindu Mahasabha Forward Bloc. Mr Bhopatkar addressed the workers for about 45 minutes in course of which he appealed to them to shed old ideas about politics and to look upon them as the future leaders of Hindustan and to rely on their own initiative and resourcefulness. In dealing with any particular political situation and not to look helplessly on towards old political leaders for lead and guidance. The new situation called for action on the part of verile [*sic*] youths and the time has now come for the students and young men to play an effective role in resisting the onslaughts that are in progress with fullest fury. Then Syt Lahiry addressed the workers for about 15 minutes in Hindi and the meeting dispersed at about 8.30 p.m.

AT RAWALPINDI

The following morning the President and Sjt Ashutosh Lahiry—accompanied by Dr Gokul Chand Narang and Captain Keshab Chandra left by Air for Rawalpindi reaching there by 10.30 a.m.... They were very much impressed with the relief organization work of the local leaders and realized the tremendous magnitude of the burden which the local leaders have been carrying on almost unaided by any outside people's organization....

Here they spent about two hours freely mixing with the refugees and getting at first hand the tragic picture of a reign of terror and devastation. The refugees were all from the rural areas of Rawalpindi districts and a very large number also were from Campbellpore district.

The refugees were found to be suffering awfully for want of clothing and for want of various essential food-grains such as oil, dal, vegetables and other things. They are being supplied early with four Chattaks of Atta and two chattaks of rice per day and with certain quantity of germinating gram without any oil or species [*sic*] or any other essential materials.

In course of the talks with the refugees it was ascertained how the Hindus and Sikhs in every locality fought and resisted for days together the onslaughts of the overwhelming number of Moslems and how they succumbed ultimately and most of them were wiped out. Several

thousands of Sikhs were found whose hair have completely cut off and beards shaved. The womenfolk recounted doleful stories of their horrible experiences.

The Hindus and Sikhs throughout the Rawalpindi district with the exception of three villages have been totally liquidated. Thousands were massacred. Thousands others were forcibly converted to Islam. Women, children were butchered with incredible brutality. Numerous young girls were carried off. Many girls below 8 or 10 years of age who could not be immediately taken into marriage were made to stand in a row—their body soaked with kerosene oil and was set fire to and they were slowly burnt alive amidst ghastly wailings. Infants were snatched away from the lap of their mothers and thrown into the boiling coldron [*sic*] and roasted alive in presence of the mothers in expectation that this kind of butchery would melt the hearts of mothers and would induce them to divulge the secret places where their wealth were kept hidden. Womenfolk were kept confined in houses which were set fire to and they were burnt alive while the menfolk were put to the sword. One instance was made known in which the Sikhs and Hindus themselves put to the sword about 32 women when they were captured by the moslems was found to be inevitable [*sic*]. Another instance of about 38 women with their children deliberately walking into fire and being burnt alive was also related by the refugees. In fact, cruelties far exceeding what the country had witnessed in other provinces have been perpetrated in Rawalpindi district.

The party returned to Rawalpindi in a sad and outraged mood and held long discussions at night with various gentlemen. The situation in the contiguous frontier province is equally grave and it will be the height of stupidity to imagine that there is going to be peace in near future either in the Punjab or in the North Western Frontier Province.

The Punjab Provincial Hindu Mahasabha has started a Relief Fund known as Punjab Hindu Sabha Relief Fund with Bhai Parmanand as President and Dr Gokul Chand Narang as Treasurer.

Mr Bhopatkar and Mr Ashutosh Lahiry left Rawalpindi at 2.30 p.m. on the 26th March by air and reached Delhi at 5.30 p.m.

2. Bhopatkar Calls for United Hindu–Sikh Front

Press Statement by L.B. Bhopatkar, President, All-India Hindu Mahasabha, 24 March 1947

AIHM Papers, File No. C-165, NMML.

The following is the statement to the Press made by Mr L.B. Bhopatkar, President, All India Hindu Mahasabha from Lahore on 24-3-47.

India is passing through very critical times, and her future largely depends upon what instructions Lord Mountbatten has brought with him from the British Cabinet and what policy the Interim Government proposes to adopt both as regards matters at home and abroad.

The Muslims are manifestly out to achieve their objective of Pakistan by fair or foul means, and it is for all those who stand for the unity and integrity of India and her independence to lay down once for all definite lines of policy and action.

It is obvious that the Muslims have declared civil war in Pakistan areas, and the recent happenings in Bengal and Punjab are but manifestations of the same. Sind has declared its intention to be a Sovereign State after June, 1948. All this indicates clearly an endeavour on the part of the Muslims to establish Pakistan by force, if it could not be had by agreement. It

will be unwise on our part to interpret it otherwise. The plain question, therefore, before India is: Whether to adopt a policy of drift as at present, or to crush ruthlessly all these attempts to divide India in their very inception. If the party or parties in whose hands is entrusted at present the destiny of India intends or intend to concede ultimately to the Muslims what they demand, duty and honour require them to do so as early as possible instead of allowing politics to drift and to face its aftermath. But if they really do not so intend, then the same duty and honour demand that they must accept the Muslim challenge and fight it down before it assumes more alarming and disastrous proportions.

Punjab has outstripped Bengal in all what a Muslim outburst means and brings in its trail. There has been terrible loss of life and property both in urban and rural areas of the Punjab. It may even be said that in the rural areas where the Hindus and Sikhs were in a hopeless minority, they have been completely wiped away.

In Bengal and more so in Punjab all the carnage, devastation and forceful conversion were the outcome not of a sudden, unpremeditated outburst of Muslim fanaticism, but of a deep-laid plot on the part of the Muslims equipped with the modern weapons of war such as tommy-guns, rifles, bombs and hand-grenades. The result was that the Sikh sword and the Hindu lathi proved to be utterly powerless to cope successfully with them.

Added to this, there was almost culpable negligence on the part of the Punjab Government to take timely steps to put down Muslim raids and riots in the western parts of the Punjab, just as they did in the eastern parts to prevent reprisals by the Hindus and Sikhs residing therein. In fact, it seems that since 4th to 10th of March, the Government had ceased to function in the Muslim majority parts of the Punjab. The Police failed in several places to rise to the occasion and to do all the needful that was expected of them. In some instances they openly [*sic*] joined the riotous mobs in their nefarious deeds.

I feel that it is time for the Hindus and the Sikhs to take stock of the situation and devise ways and means efficacious enough to enable them to effectively protect their life, liberty and property. I also feel that it is the primary duty of the Punjab Government on one hand to confiscate immediately all the arms unlawfully collected by the Muslim hooligans and on the other, to freely grant licenses of arms to Hindu Sikh minorities particularly in Rawalpindi and Multan Divisions. This course will, in my opinion, go a long way in restoring public confidence in one's own safety and the security of one's own honour and property.

A proposal is abroad to divide the Punjab into two or three zones and to hand over the administration of each zone to the ministers separately appointed for that zone. I frankly confess to my not having studied in detail so far either the significance or the implications thereof; and consequently, I am not in a position to pronounce any definite opinion about the same. But all the same, I may sound a note of warning to say that let not anything be done in haste which we will have to repent at leisure.

I may also request all my Hindu and Sikh brethren in the Punjab to note that a time has arrived when, irrespective of any petty considerations of party loyalty and affiliation, they should examine carefully and boldly the ideology and the methods they swear by, and find out whether they require re-orientation or not in order to meet the new menace. This menace being entirely communal in its context, complexion and content, it is necessary for the Hindus and Sikhs to organize themselves as such, to pool together all their resources and to create a solid Hindu-Sikh Front to meet all Muslim aggression and fanaticism. Herein lies their glory and salvation as well.

3. Patel's Reply to Narang

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Gokul Chand Narang, 25 March 1947
SPC, Vol. V, pp. 284–6.

New Delhi

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 19th instant with its enclosures.

I am sorry to say that your letters make very painful reading. You seem to believe that we do not know what is happening in the Frontier or in the Punjab, or that we do not care for what is happening there. If that is your belief, it is futile for us to try to convince you otherwise. If you think that our vacating this place from the Central Government would be of help to the Hindu community, we are prepared to do so. Your having no confidence in us is understandable, but your prejudice against the Congress is so great that no Congressman would be able to convince you that they are capable of discharging their duty towards the great Hindu community or the brave Sikh community as well as any Indian. You cannot expect us to expose all our plans, or to explain to you everything that is being done.

You are labouring under a misapprehension that the Central Government has got powers which are not being exercised in this crisis. You also feel that we are not in touch with events that are happening in the Punjab and that we get our information only from the newspapers.

You must know that there is what is called the Intelligence Department of the Government of India. There is also the Military Intelligence Service. There is, therefore, nothing which is not known to us, and of which you are aware.

Both my colleagues had come there in consultation with me and they have done what was possible for them to do. We are also doing what is possible at this end, but you cannot ignore the fact that under the present Constitution that has been functioning the provinces are more or less independent and therefore the controlling authority in emergencies is the Governor and the Viceroy.

You have not understood correctly my speech at Meerut or at other places. I still stand by that, but that speech does not indicate that I am going to provide swords for the Hindus in the Frontier or in the Punjab or in any other minority areas. My advice to them was to be prepared to defend their lives, property and the honour of their womenfolk. After all, when the third party is going to disappear, in the transitional period, trouble is bound to arise, and the unfortunate people residing in the minority areas have to bear the brunt. They must be prepared to face the consequences. It is no use demoralizing them by simply raising cries or throwing blame on others. That would not help them at all.

I have nothing but admiration for those Sikhs and Hindus who have fought bravely against heavy odds in Muktang, Rawalpindi and other adjoining areas.

When I was at Poona, I had seen a letter addressed by you to Gandhiji in very offensive terms, and since then we had come to the conclusion that no useful purpose would be served by carrying on any correspondence with you. You hold very clear ideas about us, and perhaps you don't think that we know our duties and responsibilities. Excuse me, therefore, if I thought it right not to respond to your letters in order again to hear from you in not very pleasant terms.

I can only assure you again that without your reminding us of our duties, we are fully conscious of them and are doing what is humanly possible for us to do.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

4. PPCC Resolution on Communal Outbreak in Punjab

Resolution Passed by Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, 26 March 1947
AICC Papers, File No. G-10/1947, NMML.

The Working Committee views with distress and pain, the horrible communal riots accompanied by arson, loot and murder and such terrible atrocities and brutalities from which even brutes would recoil with horror, in Rawalpindi Division, Multan, Lahore, Amritsar and Gurgaon District and other parts of the Punjab.

Reports published in the press, statements of public workers and news received in the office of the PPCC depict a scene of bestiality and medieval barbarities that must fill every human being with shame, disgust and anger. Deeds of violation, abduction of women and forcible religious conversions and of loot, arson and murder have been committed in an organized pre-planned manner on a scale which finds few parallels in the history of our country. The Government communiqués bear testimony to it.

Especially in the North Western Districts, minorities have been given a terrible blood bath by the communal maniacs. Families after families have disappeared while many a town, villages and cities have been wiped off the map.

It seems that the most modern methods of warfare have been used in these disturbances. Hand Grenades, Tommy Guns and rifles, have been freely employed, showing that the military deserters and demobilized soldiers played a leading role in this widespread carnage. In some places police is also said to have participated in such activities.

This committee deplores the huge loss of life and property and condemn in particular the acts of brutality committed against defenceless persons, especially women and children, and offers their sympathy to the innocent sufferers. This Committee finds it impossible not to connect these tragic happenings with the un-constitutional agitation by the Muslim League party which led to the resignation of the Coalition Ministry. It is amazing to note that the authorities kept quiet during this agitation in spite of the violent character of the movement at some places.

This committee hold that this outburst of brutality is the direct result of the politics of hate and civil strife that the Muslim League and other communal parties have practiced for years past, and of the threats of violence that it has daily held out in the past months.

This Committee further feels that it cannot be mere accident that the districts where serious rioting broke out, are those districts which have British SPs and DCs. It further condemns the callousness of those officials who instead of giving relief and protection to sufferers taunted and bulleyed them, asking them to go to Congress for protection.

This committee further un-reservedly condemns all such provocative utterances and speeches and slogans raised during the last two months that have led to this orgy of blood all over the province and warns the people that in view of the disastrous consequences because of the communal madness, they should no more fall in their traps and thus loose their lives and property.

In view of the very serious nature of the riots, the like of which have never happened in any Part of this country, it is essential in the opinion of the Working Committee, that a thorough enquiry be held by an impartial tribunal which can command the confident [*sic*] of the Public into the circumstances proceeding [*sic*] the fourth March incidents and the following days and the steps taken by the Government both before and during the riots to meet the situation.

This Committee further strongly urges the Government to take the following steps immediately in order to restore the confidence of the minorities in the affected areas:

1. Immediate measures should be adopted for the restoration of looted property, abducted girls and women and converted persons.
2. Immediate rounding up of hooligans and miscreants.
3. Military Pickets be posted on all the routes, roads and bridges leading to trans-border territories to prevent the looted property and abducted women being conveyed to the tribal areas.
4. Evacuating the minorities from the dangerous areas to localities of the refugee camp.
5. Immediate relief in the form of medicine, cloth and food be provided to the refugees in the camps and other isolated areas.
6. Potentially dangerous areas should be constantly patrolled by the Military.
7. Impartial special courts headed by the judges of known integrity should be established to try these police officials against whom there are serious allegations of abetment with the hooligans. As a first step they should be immediately transferred.
8. Deterrent action like confiscation of pensions, Jagirs, etc. should be taken against those retired servicemen who have taken part in these organized slaughter.
9. Compensation should be given by the Government to all the sufferers.
10. Immediate steps be taken to guard against spread of epidemic in the affected areas.
11. Arrangements should be made by the Government for harvesting the crops whose owner have either been murdered or un-traced so far.
12. Illegal possession of arms should be severely punished and such arms should be immediately recovered and confiscated.
13. All religious conversions after 1st March, 1947 should be declared illegal by the Government.
14. As the minorities have lost all confidence in the majority, so the committee asks Government to concede their demand that can give them sense of security and safety.

This committee realize that the wounds inflicted not only on the bodies but the spirits and self respects of the people will take long to heal. Nevertheless they appeal to them to forget and forgive and to utilize this terrible experience for re-establishing good will and friendly relations between the different communities which have been so rudely disturbed during recent times. The Working Committee is of opinion that the communal problem cannot be solved by intimidation and violence but by mutual understanding, friendly discussion and, if necessary, by agreed arbitration.

In this dismal picture of communal madness many heartening instances of neighbouring love and mutual amity between the communities have come to light when Hindus and Sikhs gave shelter to the Muslim neighbours while Muslim protected their Hindu neighbours.

Such instances are a ray of hope for the future. This committee congratulates such peace loving citizens.

Finally this committee calls upon all the Congress committees and Congress men and all the citizens of whatever community and creeds with whatever party affiliation to come forward at this critical juncture and help to maintain the peace of our dear land by forming peace committees and Mohalla committees to preach and practice communal harmony and good neighbourliness to save the innocent men, women and children from the fury of communal hooligans.

Secretary,
Punjab Prov. Congress Committee,
Bradlaugh Hall, Lahore.

5. 'Hindus and Sikhs Acknowledge Muslim Chivalry'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 26 March 1947.

STORIES of Muslim chivalry and good neighbourliness towards the minorities are daily pouring in from strife-torn Punjab. Reports of how the Musalmans protected the lives, properties and places of worship of the Hindus and Sikhs who lived in their midst, are now available. Below is a translation of two pamphlets issued by non-Muslims—Hindus and Sikhs—acknowledging with gratitude the help rendered and kindness shown to them by Muslims.

The following is the translation of a pamphlet issued in Amritsar on 12-3-47, under the caption, 'Bloody Incidents of Amritsar and the Call of Truth.'

'We know that the violent atmosphere of Lahore will have its repercussions on the peace-loving city of Amritsar; and that was exactly what happened. The animal instincts of the people of Amritsar had the better of them and they wrought havoc in the city. The Hindus, Musalmans and Sikhs fought freely. Where we saw the bloody scenes of massacre we also saw property worth crores being burnt to ashes and such horrid scenes of arson were witnessed which perhaps have no parallel in the whole of India.

'It is most shameful and regrettable that where we lived like brothers today, we see heaps of dead bodies. But, Kucha Chatan (a Mohalla of Amritsar) provides an sterling living example. Here the Musalmans are in an overwhelming majority with a number of Hindus and Sikhs living amongst them. Here our Muslim brothers not only guarded our lives and property, but also provided us with all sorts of facilities of life. We are very much thankful and indebted to our Muslim brethren of Kucha Chatan for all that they did for us. ...

'We once again appeal to Sikhs, Hindus and Musalmans to protect one another in their own mohallas in the same manner, and to embrace each other like brothers and divorce mutual suspicious and distrust from their minds and help each other in starting their businesses and normal life.'...

Following is the translation of another pamphlet issued in Amritsar, entitled, 'Thanks.'

We signatories of Division No. 12 (Chowk Farid, Mori Gunj, Kucha Noor Shah, Kucha Arif Dar, Kucha Subo Dar, Kucha Deputy Aziz Uddin, Ktra Sher Singh Kohna, Bazar Shaikhan, Bazar Natha Singh, etc.) heartily thank the Musalmans of the division. In spite of the fact that our Hindu and Sikh brothers plundered and butchered those Musalmans who lived in their midst and whose safety they had pledged, the Musalmans behaved with utmost patience and courage and kept the Musalmans in check. They fulfilled the promises given to us and saved our lives, property and honour at the risk of their own lives.

We are writing this without any pressure and with full consciousness and we want to say that we have full faith in our Muslim brethren and we appeal for peace and harmony. ...

6. 'Let Mamdot Form Ministry or Hold Fresh Elections: Ghazanfar Ali Asks Punjab Governor to End Sec. 93 Rule'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 30 March 1947.

Mr Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Health Member in the Interim Government in a Press statement issued on Saturday in New Delhi on the situation in the Punjab demanded that the Governor of the Punjab should either let the Leader of the Muslim League in the Provincial Assembly form a Ministry or dissolve the legislature and hold fresh elections.

'The policy of delaying action in this direction and letting the Section 93 regime continue will be wholly anomalous,' Mr Ghazanfar Ali Khan added, 'and altogether wrong—particularly after the British Government's clearly pronounced intention of withdrawal from the Indian political scene next year.'

The following is the full text of the statement:

'What is the Governor of the Punjab doing to end the Section 93 rule in that province? Or does he propose to let it drift on? These are questions which many people are asking, and which, I consider it necessary, should be voiced publicly.

'Is the normal constitutional procedure to remain suspended indefinitely in the province, because there have occurred communal disturbances?

'How these disturbances started and who were responsible for inciting people to indulge in violence for political objectives are separate questions which, I trust, will be referred to a competent and impartial committee of enquiry.'

THREATS OF VIOLENCE

'As far as the crimes committed during these disturbances are concerned, every right thinking person must condemn them irrespective of whether they were committed in certain rural areas of Rawalpindi division or in Chowk Prag Das in Amritsar. I have personally never felt hesitation in condemning them in the strongest language possible.

'The point however, is that the fact of communal disturbances or threats of violence cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the constitutional rights of the people.

'If such disturbances could justify the suspension of the normal constitution, most of our provinces would be under the direct rule of the Governors today. The immediate duty of the Punjab Governor in the constitutional field is quite clear.

'He has invited the Leader of the Muslim League Party to form a Ministry on the presumption that he is likely to command a majority of the Legislature, and the Khan of Mamdot, I believe, has informed the Governor that he is in a position to advise him about the formation of the Government and is prepared to face the Legislature. If the presumption is still there, the Governor should let the Khan of Mamdot proceed with his task.

'In case the Governor thinks that the presumption does not hold good and that no one in the House is in a position to command an absolute majority, he should put the position immediately to the electorate by dissolving the House and holding fresh elections. It is then up to the electorate to produce a stable majority party....

7. 'Sacred Blood of Our Martyrs'

The Tribune, 31 March 1947.

LAHORE, March 30.—The Shromani Akali Dal's Working Committee in a lengthy resolution on the happenings in the Punjab has after condemning 'the barbarous acts of loot, arson, rape, ravish, abduction, forcible conversion and forced marriages...' in the riot-affected Rawalpindi and Multan Districts and the North Western Frontier Province expressed the view that...

Tribute

The meeting also placed on record its deep sense of sorrow at the murders of Babu Labh Singh, ex-President of the Shromani Akali Dal, S. Nanak Singh, Pleader, Multan, S. Jaswant Singh of Dheri, Member SGPC, S. Bhagat Singh of Khaparkheri, S. Banta Singh, ex-President, Gurdwara Chheharta Sahib, Bhai Mangal Singh of Amritsar and numerous other Sikhs, including women and children in the districts of Attock, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Multan and in the NWFP and prays that these brave souls may rest in peace.

The Akali Dal feels confident that the sacred blood of our martyrs would not have been shed in vain, but instead will enable the Panth to come out victorious in the end.

(b) The SA Dal expresses its profound sympathy with all those, whose property has been destroyed, children and women-folk molested and subjected to untold, inhuman and brutal tyrannies and who are taking refuge in Relief Centres. The SA Dal assures them of all possible help it can render.

Punitive Police and Fines

The SA Dal urges upon the Punjab Government

- (i) that punitive police posts be stationed in villages, a section whose populace committed inhuman crimes of arson, a general killing of minorities and looted and destroyed their property.
- (ii) That punitive fines be imposed upon that section of the populace of such areas, at least adequate for covering the loss of property and the cost of the punitive police.
- (iii) That the riotous people of those areas, especially the ex-servicemen be disarmed, searches be made to recover smuggled and stolen arms and ammunition.
- (iv) That licenses to carry arms be issued liberally to Hindus and Sikhs of these areas.
- (v) That the culprits and the ringleaders be immediately arrested, and be awarded sufficiently deterrent punishment.

The SA Dal urges upon the Punjab Government to take immediate steps for the early rehabilitation of the refugees.

Local Authorities' Failure

The Shromani Akali Dal notes with great concern that at rural places, local authorities not only failed to effectively check the occurrences of pre-planned hooliganism but in many cases actively sided with the aggressors and abetted the commission of various acts of lawlessness, resulting in the wholesale destruction and ruin of the minorities in large areas and calls upon the Government and His Excellency the Governor to take stern action against such persons immediately.

The meeting further recorded that this meeting of the Shromani Akali Dal is of the view that an overwhelming majority of one community in the Punjab Police is dangerous for the

peace of the province and therefore, demands of His Excellency the Governor of the Punjab to adopt such measures immediately as to increase the number of non-Muslims in the police to at least 50 per cent in the near future.

8. 'Perpetrators of Crime Still at Large: Free Elections Impossible'

The Tribune, 31 March 1947.

LAHORE, March 30.—An assertion that the Muslim League Party in the Punjab Assembly has no majority—every non-League Party, in no uncertain terms, has refused its co-operation to the League—has been made by the former Coalition Finance Minister, Mr Bhim Sen Sachar, in the course of his rejoinder to the statement of Mr Ghazanfar Ali, who had asked that the Punjab Governor should let the leader of the Muslim League Party form a ministry or dissolve the legislature and order fresh elections.

Mr Ghazanfar Ali forgets, says Mr Sachar, that in the atmosphere created by terrorism, loot, arson, murder and other heinous crimes, which has been created, and with the majority of the principal perpetrators being still at large, free elections are impossible.

Instead of 'posing the role of injured innocence to instal a communal Ministry in the Punjab' or to ask for elections 'which would intensify communal bitterness and be a serious danger to law and order', and his 'political associates restored', Mr Sachar has asked Mr Ghazanfar Ali to help in restoring confidence and peace in the countryside and present a solution like sincere and true Punjabis.

The following is the full text of Mr Sachar's statement:

'I have read Mr Ghazanfar Ali's statement on the Punjab situation with pain and disgust. It is a cruel, though an awkward, attempt at misrepresentation and harassment, but it will neither deceive nor coerce anybody. There is no warrant for the statement that the Governor should either let the Muslim League form a Ministry or dissolve the Legislature and hold fresh elections.

'His facile assertion that Muslim League commands a majority in the Legislature is without any iota of substance. The League Party by itself does not possess the requisite strength of members, and non-League Party in the Provincial Legislature has in no uncertain terms flatly refused co-operation to the League in helping to boost a purely communal ministry. Mr Ghazanfar Ali and his friends know it too well that a purely communal ministry cannot simply function in the Punjab. It is gracious of Mr Ghazanfar Ali to suggest that the League would condescend to include representatives of other parties in its ministry, but the question is if anybody is willing to join the League on its terms. Mere lip sympathy after the recent mad orgy of com-sentatives [*sic*] of other parties in its Province will convince not even the most credulous. The League has positively lost caste with the non-League elements in the Province and if my information is correct even with some of its own members. Its empty assurances carry no weight. Wordy condemnation of horrible and inhuman crimes committed by Mr Ghazanfar Ali's followers sound simply hollow and add insult to injury. Are the members of the League party willing to openly help the authorities in arresting and trying the bloody foes of humanity whose misdeeds should make any one hang his head in shame? Does not Mr Ghazanfar Ali know that rather than help authorities in bringing the heartless criminals to book, some of his exalted friends have been suggesting to the criminals to remove all evidence of their crimes by destroying looted property and making away with the abducted innocent girls. My friend must face the facts. Lasting friendship in the Punjab cannot be had by uttering a few fine words. It is the heart that must speak.'

Section 93 Rule

'I regret the continuance of Section 93 no less than anybody else. But it is not decent of Mr Ghazanfar Ali to pose the role of injured innocence in order to instal a communal ministry in Punjab. And a sermon on constitutionalism sounds odd in the mouth of Mr Ghazanfar Ali, to have indulged in all sorts of indecent, provocative and forceful methods to dislodge the Coalition Ministry, commanding a clear majority in the legislature was nothing, but a deliberate repudiation of all accepted canons of parliamentary Government. Neither threats nor entreaties can cut any ice in the political field of the Punjab. Let Mr Ghazanfar Ali and his political associates in the Punjab actively help in restoring confidence and peace in the countryside. Let them come out openly and present a solution—like sincere and true Punjabis. There is no other way.

'Mr Ghazanfar Ali, says Mr Sachar, asks for fresh elections, but he forgets that terrorism, loot, arson, murder and other more heinous and degrading crimes openly committed in the Punjab especially when the (majority) of perpetrators of these crimes including the principal ones are still at large, make it impossible to hold any election which would be free from intimidation and undue influence. Does he not also realize that holding of elections at this time would intensify communal bitterness and be a serious danger to law and order which should be the paramount duty of every right thinking man to restore and maintain.

'Further how can fresh elections assuming they could be held in the present turbulent conditions solve the present Punjab tangle? Suppose—and it is only a supposition the Muslim League succeeds in capturing clear 88 seats in a house of 175; obviously it will not become more representative than the last Coalition Government commanding 95 votes. If a Government of 95 members composed of all but the League elements in the Assembly cannot, according to the League properly manage the affairs of the Punjab, with what face can the League by itself claim to be entrusted with the task of running the Government of the Province. Bluffs would take it nowhere. Let League pause and think.'

9. Formation of Punjab Ministry: Factions Within the League

Letter from M.A. Jinnah to Firoz Khan Noon, 3 April 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 490–1.

Dear Mr Noon,

I am in receipt of your letter of 22nd March, 1947 and the Urdu letter which you have enclosed. The version given in the Urdu letter of my talk with Akhtar Ali Khan and one or two others who came with him, when he referred to the leadership of the Punjab Assembly League Party, is entirely incorrect. As a matter of fact, when Mr Akhtar Ali Khan started saying that you should be elected as leader of the Party and not Mamdot, I told him that he was living behind time and was entirely ignorant of what had already taken place, and that my information was that the Party had already elected Mamdot unanimously and that you had proposed his name. I told him that that sort of misinformed talk did not do any good and that now all must loyally work with their leader who had been unanimously elected and stop all this loose talk. You can see from the date of the interview that he had with me that it was after the Party had decided unanimously to elect Mamdot as leader and I advised them all, including Mr Akhtar Ali Khan, to work in a team and with unity which was most essential at this critical time that we are facing [*sic*].

I think you are unduly sensitive. Please dismiss from your mind that after what happened in Delhi when we had a frank talk, I have any doubt now left in my mind about your earnestness and desire to work in a team. That is the only way in which we shall succeed.

I have noted what you say with regard to the Rawalpindi situation and I shall be very glad to discuss the matter when I reach Delhi. I am leaving on Friday by air and hope to be there the same afternoon.

Yours sincerely,
M.A. JINNAH

10. Rescue Abducted Women Immediately

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Evan Jenkins, 4 April 1947
SWJN, Vol. II. pp. 303–4.

New Delhi

Dear Sir Evan,

I received a large deputation from Rawalpindi and Mianwali this morning who gave me a long report about their difficulties.¹ I asked them to write it down as briefly as possible and they have now given me the enclosed note. I have no personal knowledge of these happenings since I visited Rawalpindi, and I am, therefore, taking the liberty of forwarding the note to you. It may be a one-sided note and exaggerated in parts. That you will be in a better position to judge.

2. There is one point, however, to which I should like to draw your special attention as I did when I met you last. This is the question of rescuing women who have been abducted or forcibly converted. You will realize that nothing adds to popular passion more than stories of abductions of women, and so long as these abducted women are not rescued trouble will simmer and might possibly blaze out. Every day's delay in rescuing them adds to the difficulties of the situation and makes rescue more unlikely. In view of the open allegations of partiality against the police, it was suggested that the military might help in this rescue work. It appears from the report I am sending you that about 200 such women were in fact recovered as also a large quantity of looted property. I am told that the military has been stopped from doing this work now, although about 100 women have still to be rescued. I would request you to take special interest in this matter so that the rescue of these women as well as those who have suffered compulsory conversion might be effected as soon as possible. It is unfortunate that many people place no reliance on the police in such matters.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

¹ The report had blamed the civil authorities for interfering with the work of the military and preventing them from performing their legitimate duties. It demanded, among other things, that the military should be empowered to try and sentence summarily all offenders, and that the rescue work by the military should be expelled. It also demanded removal of some Muslim officials from Rawalpindi because of their communal attitude and the reinforcements of the police force in Rawalpindi with large numbers belonging to the minority communities.



11. Report from Punjab Province

Extract from Fortnightly Report on Punjab for Second Half of March 1947, 7 April 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.

1. POLITICAL AND COMMUNAL—The situation in the Punjab has improved very considerably during the fortnight covered by this report. Apart from stray incidents the Western and Central Punjab are now comparatively quiet, and in the Eastern Punjab, now the most menacing area, quick action is dealing effectively with such disturbances as take place. Generally disorders are fewer in number and smaller in size with the result that in some places it has been possible to decrease the severity of the special control measures enforced, while in others it has been practicable to reduce the number of troops acting in aid of the civil authorities. The improvement however, and unfortunately, is due to Administrative action and vigilance, to fear (in some measure) of the new powers which Government have taken in Acts and on Ordinance recently made law, and not to any real amelioration in communal relations. The situation therefore lacks an essential ingredient which would furnish an assurance for future peace. Since the 4th of March, and until the end of the month, official estimates of casualties are 2,090 dead and 1,142 seriously injured, but no claim can be made that the figures are accurate. Meanwhile, relieved of much of the immediate pressure of suppressing disorders, police attention is being given increasingly to the investigation of the crimes which were committed. Already some hundreds of arrests have been made, an appreciable quantity of looted property has been recovered and a feeling that retribution will demand its price is spreading and is doing some good. There is still much to do, however, and in such matters the task of the police is made difficult by the communal attitude of the public who often rate other interests higher than the bringing to justice of the true culprits. Police work is also hampered by efforts which are made to influence officers and by unwarranted allegation which sometimes almost amount to persecution.

As has been said, any indication is lacking of an improvement in the relationship between the Hindus and Sikhs on the one hand and the Muslims on the other. Indeed it is safe to say that feelings between them have never been so strained or the chances of their coming together never so remote. Invisibly but definitely all non-Muslims have been drawn together and there has been a manifest stiffening in their resolve neither to collaborate with the Muslims nor to suffer their domination. Equally on the Muslim side there has been a hardening of determination and Muslim parties other than the Muslim League have been affected. The Ahrars are now opposed to Congress and the Khaksars are going the same way. Even Muslim Congressmen are dismayed for they feel that their parent body has discarded its pretence of nationalism and they are anxiously considering where their loyalty should now be given.

Everybody in the Province accepts that the portents of the future are grave and that in the absence of a political settlement to which the Muslims and the Sikhs can subscribe the chances of escaping disorder, infinitely more wide-spread than that which has recently taken place, are slender. It is realized that such a settlement can be either on a provincial level or on a higher plane. So far as the former goes honest endeavour has ceased to be made and hope has virtually been abandoned, for the communists are hardly on speaking terms; their approaches to each other are mainly of an acrimonious character in the press and a social and economic boycott is increasing each day in effectiveness both in towns and in villages. The

possibility that an all-India settlement can come about is accepted, but the degree of optimism entertained in this respect is not high.

The Congress resolution favouring the partition of the Punjab as a solution and Mr Jinnah's strong opposition to any such plan are in the understanding of most people sign-posts on the road which leads to continued disagreement and to strife....

12. Increasing Communal Tensions

Letter from M.K. Gandhi to Louis Mountbatten, 7 April 1947

TOP, Vol. X, p. 146.

BHANGI COLONY, READING ROAD, NEW DELHI

Dear Friend,

I have pressing letters from friends in the Punjab asking me to go there, even if for a few days. Pandit Nehru agrees. Nevertheless I would like you to guide me too....

Then Noakhali calls. If the wires received by me during the last two days are to be relied upon, there is increasing lawlessness in Noakhali. Attempts at roasting people alive have been traced twice, and looting etc. is going on. You will see my public statement in the Press.

This outbreak of violence is not a mere detail. If it cannot be dealt with now, it won't be fourteen months hence.

Yours sincerely,

M.K. GANDHI

13. Communal Attitude of Sikh Leaders

Letter from S.E. Abbott to G.E.B. Abell Forwarding a Letter by Baldev Singh to the Punjab Governor, 10 April 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 124-6.

Secret.

D.O. No. G.S. 206

[My dear Abell,]

HE the Governor mentioned in his letter No. 663 of 9th April to HE the intensely communal attitude of certain leaders including apparently the Hon'ble Sardar Baldev Singh. He thinks HE may be interested in the enclosed copy of a letter from the Hon'ble Sardar Baldev Singh and of the acknowledgement he has sent to it. The letter is very communal in tone, and the last sentence of paragraph 4 comes oddly from the Defence Member, whose prejudice against Muslim troops cannot long remain secret.

Yours sincerely,

S.E. ABBOTT

Enclosure 1

BALDEV SINGH TO JENKINS

Defence Department, New Delhi.

April 7th, 1947

My dear Sir Evan,

Ever since my return from tour in the Western Districts in the Punjab, I have been overwhelmed with the distressing accounts of the victims of communal riots and the terrible plight to which thousands of the survivors have been reduced. You doubtless must have both seen and heard of these things too. The more one hears of what has happened, the more it seems as if the attack on non-Muslims was premeditated and even organized. It was certainly a direct consequence of the most reprehensible utterances of responsible Muslim League leaders, many of whom indulged in open incitement to violence over a number of months particularly since last year; and since no action was taken against them or their supporters in Muslim press, the rank and file were emboldened—more so when during the League's defiance of the Public Safety Ordinance its demonstrators got away with almost every form of the so-called 'peaceful civil disobedience movement' which ultimately culminated in the resignation of the late Coalition Ministry. The inaction of the police and the authorities generally during those fateful five weeks, I have no doubt, contributed in no small degree to embolden the spirit of Muslim communal aggressiveness. All this has been an eye-opener to non-Muslims particularly in places where they were almost abandoned to some of the vilest outbursts of felony. The gulf between them and Muslims is unbridgeable.

2. I have, as you are perhaps already aware, expressed my own and the views of Sikhs and non-Muslims generally on this sad chapter in the history of my Province to His Excellency the Viceroy and His Majesty's Government. All I will say here is that though we have read and heard the appeals for peace made by the Punjab Leaguers, we also hear and know of so many other things as to their designs and plottings that it is impossible for us to take them seriously. What is needed is to take every possible precaution to prevent a recurrence of trouble and it is with this end in view that I am writing this letter.

3. An Ordinance was issued recently giving the Military authorities the same powers as the Police and it is gratifying to know that the former made a good job of the work they were entrusted with in recovering looted properties, restoring abducted girls and apprehending criminals and goondas. I am now informed that the DC Rawalpindi has now issued orders to the Military not to interfere in this work which, according to him, must be left to the Police only. I do not know if this is correct or whether the DC is competent to issue such orders. If it is correct, I would request you to please see that the Military continue to act as before. This is necessary in order that confidence may be restored rapidly.

4. It is freely rumoured that large quantities of arms are being smuggled into the Punjab from the Frontier and Tribal Areas. Such smuggling is nothing new but in present circumstances greater vigilance is obviously more necessary. Here again it is alleged that the Police, which is preponderatingly [*sic*] Muslim, is not taking action against the smugglers. You are, I have no doubt, already doing whatever is possible. Enough non-Muslim Police is perhaps not readily available. May I suggest non-Muslim Military Units might be utilized to do this job as a special security measure and also to hunt down unlicensed arms-keepers.

5. I am glad to see from reports that you are taking steps to increase non-Muslim element in the Police. Widest publicity should be given to this move and I do hope that a more representative Police Force will be formed as early as possible. This will go a long way in restoring confidence among the minorities now gravely suffering under a sense of insecurity. In this connection, the demobilized soldiers will, I am sure, prove useful. The other day, I received a representation from Mazbhi Sikhs who have served during the war and have lately been demobilized. It will help the resettlement problem as well if they and others are encouraged to join the Police.

6. Another point and I have done. I am receiving reports that a number of Sikhs have been deprived of their Kirpans by the Police. I need not stress the grave objection to such incidents in view of the religious susceptibilities of the Sikh community in the matter. The Kirpans seized from Sikhs, it is said, have been made over to Muslims by Muslim Policemen. I shall feel obliged if you will very kindly have this report examined. The misuse of Kirpan by a Sikh must be checked; he should however not be deprived of its lawful possession.

Yours sincerely,

BALDEV SINGH

14. 'Riot-stricken Hindus and Sikhs Must Not Migrate—Sardar Swarn Singh and Lehna Singh's Appeals'

The Tribune, 10 April 1947.

LAHORE, April 9.—An earnest appeal to the riot-stricken people in the Punjab not to leave their ancestral homes or to go away from the refugees camp to other places outside the Punjab has been made by Sardar Swarn Singh, former Coalition Minister and President Punjab Riot Sufferers Relief Committee and Dr Lehna Singh, MLA, General Secretary PPCC in two separate statements. They say that this mass emigration by the Hindus and Sikhs would create most difficult problems not only for those who go away but for the minorities in the Punjab as a whole.

In his statement Sardar Swarn Singh says:

According to the information received from the Refugee Camp at Wah and Kala and also from some towns of the Western Punjab, it seems that a large number of people are leaving these towns and going to other places either in Central or Eastern Punjab. Some have gone out of the Province also. The number of refugees in Patiala alone has gone up to 17,000. This unplanned and haphazard migration is bound to lead to ruin and disaster. This sort of evacuation will not create difficulties for evacuees, but for the non-Muslim minorities in the province as a whole. I know Hindus and Sikhs in the Western Punjab have suffered heavily. Mere consolation and sympathy cannot heal the wounds that have been inflicted upon them. In spite of it I say that Hindus and Sikhs must not move from their places till some definite and organized plan is placed before them. The Punjab Riot Sufferers Relief Committee and the Punjab Relief Committee have recently formed a joint committee to tackle this gigantic problem of the rehabilitation of the refugees. This Committee is already seriously considering this question and I hope the committee will be able to chalk out a definite programme within a short time. In the mean time I would urge upon all well wishers of the Hindus and Sikhs to discourage this mass migration, if not stopped immediately, it is bound to prove suicidal to us in the long run.

Dr Lehna Singh's Appeal

Dr Lehna Singh Sethi MLA, General Secretary PPCC in his appeal to the minorities in North Western Punjab says: Reports are being received that panic-stricken Hindus and Sikhs are evacuating the Districts of Rawalpindi, Campbellpore, Jhelum, Gujrat, Mianwali and Multan. For thousands of years our ancestors lived in this area and contributed immensely to its prosperity and development. To leave our ancestral homes flourishing and prosperous for an unknown future is highly regrettable.

No one doubts that in Rawalpindi, Campbellpore and Jhelum the minorities have been treated horribly but for a considerable portion of a population to migrate from one area to the other in a state of helplessness without any plan and official aid is extremely difficult. For a minority to quit like this is both suicidal and unwise, in fact this tantamounts to cowardice.

The present state of affairs cannot last long. The military is stationed in these areas at present and will remain stationed so long as the normal conditions do not prevail. The rounding up of culprits though slow is still proceeding apace.

I have toured the various districts and can say with certainty that the authorities will try their best to prevent any recurrence of communal riots. In case they recur they will be crushed in no time.

In view of the above, I would request my Hindu and Sikh brethren not to leave their ancestral homes and not to believe rumours. They should fearlessly and bravely stick to their posts and carry out their daily normal activities.

15. 'Muslims Engaged in Life and Death Struggle: Ghazanfar's Advice to Students'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 12 April 1947.

...PUNJAB DISTURBANCES

'A striking proof of their unity, organization and discipline was furnished by the recent civil liberties movement, which Muslims carried on under the leadership of the Provincial Muslim League, for about five weeks on non-violent and non-communal lines to a successful end. Unfortunately, things happened in the Punjab soon after, which presented a sad contrast to this peaceful and province-wide struggle of the masses for certain elementary political and civil rights. I am referring to the recent communal disturbances in various parts of this province. I have never hesitated to condemn the crimes and misdeeds perpetrated during this break-down of law and order.

'I hope to God that the impending transfer of power from British to Indian hands will be completed peacefully; but if either of the two major parties refuses to be just to the other, or to follow the golden maxim of "Live and let live" and, if as a result, there are fights, I wish that some method may be found of establishing a convention to be respected on all sides to spare at least women and young children from barbarous attacks, murder and torture. The horrible example of such crimes on a mass scale, set by Bihar, seems to have dulled people's sense of chivalry and humanity. Wherever communal riots now break out, helpless women and children become a special object of attack along with men. This happened in Chowk Pragdas in Amritsar. This happened in the rural areas of northern Punjab, and this again happened in Gurgooan district. I condemn, with all the emphasis at my command, any kind of unprovoked attack whether by a Muslim, Hindu or Sikh, on an innocent and weak neighbour, anywhere in the country, particularly when the victims are helpless women and children.'

DELIBERATE PROVOCATION

‘While referring, however, to the ugly crimes which have disfigured the fair name of the Punjab during recent weeks, I must also emphasize the need for everybody to maintain a correct perspective about the unfortunate episode. Communal rioting in the Punjab was deliberately provoked and encouraged as a means of obstructing normal constitutional procedure. There exists clear documentary evidence in support of this in the form of reports published in the local Press of public speeches delivered in Lahore on March 3 last. Let anybody read those speeches and see if, even in cold print and after proper and careful subediting, they mean anything else than a call to certain section of the people to indulge in violence and bloodshed. The peace of the Punjab was thus wantonly and deliberately destroyed. The earliest phase of communal disturbances in Lahore and certain other towns clearly reflects the result of these speeches. An official record of the happenings in Lahore on March 4 is in existence in the form of a Public Communiqué. No official version of the sequence of events in Multan, Amritsar and Rawalpindi towns had been published by the Punjab Government, as far as I know, but it can be safely asserted that trouble started at all these places in more or less the same way. Certain excitable elements took their cue from the speeches delivered in Lahore and started demonstrations involving ugly acts of violence.

‘The trouble might have been nipped in the bud if the League Leaders’ sincere efforts to secure a united front of the leaders of all communities for the limited purpose of checking violence and restoring peace and order had received equally sincere response. Some leaders, however, seem to have feared that, if they joined hands with the Muslim League even for the limited purpose of restoring and maintaining peace in the province, the process might develop into a Muslim League Ministry. In these circumstances the trouble spread, got completely out of control, first as a result of wild rumours and later due to a variety of causes, the bad example of one man or group being followed by another and fanatical passions coming into play along with economic causes and motives of sordid gain....’

EXPLANATION DUE

‘I wish my non-Muslim friends who occupy positions of influence in their communities would show a better sense of responsibility towards at least their own people than indulging in this kind of short-sighted opportunism. How can they in this age of progressive democracy hope to keep the Muslim majority of this province permanently out of their proper place in popular self-Government?’

‘How long can the Section 93 rule last? In fact it seems to me that an explanation has already become due to the public of the Punjab from the authorities concerned as to why the Section 93 regime is now in existence and what steps are being taken to end it. Is it there because no political party is willing or able to form a Ministry, or is it there because certain minorities are refusing to accept the representation which the majority offers them in the Ministry? Or again, is it being continued because there have occurred communal disturbances in certain parts of the province, or certain people are threatening to create more disturbances if popular rule is restored in the Punjab? The constitutional position is clear beyond any doubt. The Muslim League party claims that it is in a position to form a Ministry and face the House at once. What is the justification for refusing to let the question be decided on the floor of the House? The margin of the majority which the Ministry may be able to command is irrelevant. Who can say whether any Ministry which commands a majority today will or will not prove stable in future. As far as the representation of the minorities in a Muslim League Ministry in the Punjab is

concerned, the offer of not only a just but a generous share for the Sikhs is always open, in spite of whatever might have happened. If it is not accepted, it is no fault of the Muslim League. The Congress Party, however, stands on a different footing altogether. It is an All-India Party. In its majority provinces it has shown no desire to form coalitions with the Muslim League, even if it meant the formation of purely Hindu ministries. In the circumstances, it cannot expect to be invited into a coalition by the Muslim League in Punjab. This, however, does not mean that a Muslim League Ministry will be unmindful of the legitimate interests of either the Hindus or any other smaller minority. It will strain every nerve to protect them and to give them the same safeguards which any minority may be enjoying anywhere else in the country.'

16. Congressmen Not to Be Associated with Communal Relief Organizations

Letter from Sadiq Ali to the General Secretary, District Congress Committee, Gurgaon,
12 April 1947
AICC Papers, File No. G-8 (I)/1947, NMML.

The Gen. Secretary,
Dist Cong Committee,
Gurgoan.

Dear Friend,

We have your letter of the 10th instant. The Congress is a nationalist organization dedicated to the service of the whole people of India irrespective of caste and creed. It is not desirable for Congressmen to be associated with communal relief organizations. We should discourage such associations. If you have any particular case in mind which you think is leading to harmful consequences it should be brought to the notice of the PCC. Cases of this kind have to be viewed in the light of the situation obtaining in the district concerned.

Yours sincerely,
Sadiq Ali
PERMANENT SECRETARY

Enclosure

President: Rao Gajraj Singh, Advocate
General Secretary: Mr Roop Lal Mehta
Treasurer: L. Giasi Ram

**The District Congress Committee,
GURGAON**

Hodal
10-4-'47

The President,
Indian National Congress,
Delhi.

Most respected sir,

Will you very kindly clarify the Indian National Congress Policy on the following points:

1. Whether a member of Provincial Congress Committee, and office bearers of a District and Tehsil Congress Committees can be a member of Hindu Relief organization organized by Rashtrya Svayam Sewak Sangh and Hindu Mahasabha under the name of Hindu Relief Committee?
2. In case the above is not permissible, disciplinary action against any individual such as above can be taken?

An reply will be very much appreciated.

Yours obediently,
Roop Lal Mehta
General Secy

PS. Please reply to
Mr Rooplal Mehta,
Hodal,
District Gurgaon.

17. Governor of Punjab Partisan to Hindu-Sikh Front

Extract of a Letter from Liaquat Ali Khan to Louis Mountbatten, 15 April 1947
IOR, R/3/1/90, Acc. No. 3415, NAI.

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

I believe that during the consultation that you are holding with provincial Governors, provincial administrations and the conditions prevailing in the various provinces are likely to come under review. It is a matter of vital concern to the Muslim League that the situation in the Punjab should be understood in its true perspective, and that you should bear in mind our deep resentment of the present partial and unjustified attitude that is being adopted by Sir Evan Jenkins, the Governor of the Punjab....

Events in the Punjab since the imposition of Section 93 have made it clear that the present administration has made it a matter of policy to suppress, intimidate and coerce the Muslims and it appears as if the Governor considers it his personal concern to do all that he possibly can to prevent the majority community in the Punjab from having its proper share in the administration of the province.

Everywhere in the riot affected or threatened areas which cover nearly the whole of the province, the administration is adopting an attitude of hostility towards Muslims. In all districts vast numbers of Muslims have been indiscriminately arrested and even in places like Amritsar where the Muslims have suffered the heaviest losses, many more Muslims than non-Muslims are in jail. Throughout the province an overwhelming percentage of responsible officials are non-Muslims. Out of 29 District Magistrates only 9 are Muslims¹ whilst there is not a single Muslim Commissioner or DIG of Police in the Punjab. Similarly, the special investigation staff set up to enquire into the recent disturbances is preponderantly non-Muslim, so much so that in Rawalpindi only 5 out of 26 officials of this are Muslim, and this at a time when justice by any except a mixed staff is out of the question.

The general behaviour of the administrators, is one of open hostility towards the Muslims. Responsible officials, who are expected to have no political affiliations openly declare their hostility to the Muslim ideal of Pakistan, and the DIG of Rawalpindi Division recently issued

a press statement couched in unrestrained terms threatening direct vengeance on the Muslims. High ranking leaders of the Muslim League are treated with contempt and intimidated by the officials who openly threaten them with reprisals by Sikhs. To all sections of the Muslims, the officials make no secret of their partiality for and sympathy with the Sikhs, and paint in lurid colours the prospects of Sikh retaliation. Muslims are complacently informed that the Sikhs are arming aggressively, as if it were the duty of Government to encourage such preparations rather than to prevent them.

Even in a technical matter like the censorship of news, the most provocative and aggressive speeches and statements of Sikh and Hindu leaders are allowed to pass, whilst even the mildest utterances by the Muslim leaders are withheld from publication.

The Sikhs and Hindus are at the same time being encouraged in every way to adopt an aggressive attitude. Despite reports of large-scale arming by the Sikhs, and of smuggling of arms from the adjoining Sikh States who have publicly declared their resolve to support the Akali Party and its policy in every way—reports which the officials themselves confess to be well-founded—nothing is being done in the matter. In the present state of high tension the Sikhs are being allowed to display large swords under the name of kirpans, whilst the Muslims are being deprived everywhere of even pen-knives. The Sikhs do not claim their religious sacrament of carrying a Kirpan in the army, or the police, in the law courts, the legislatures or in jail, but they are allowed to carry Kirpans when doing so imperils the peace of the land. On the other hand when the Muslims claim the right to wear a sword, it is argued that whilst the weapon in the possession of a Sikh is an emblem of spirituality in the hands of a Muslim it becomes a menace to others, although it is freely admitted that the chief present danger to the Punjab comes from the temper of the Sikhs.

Any impartial assessment of the position in the Punjab leads one to the inescapable conclusion that the Governor and his subordinates want to foster chaos in the province. The minorities are being deliberately encouraged to oppose any reasonable settlement with the majority, and are being led to believe that if they are able to create further disturbances in the province, it would be a political argument in their favour and against the Muslims in the final disposition of power in India.

I have placed these facts before you, because I feel that unless the Governor of the Punjab is persuaded to alter his present attitude very serious consequences may follow, which might have effects that cannot be limited to the boundaries of the Punjab.

I also feel that the time has come when a final decision must be taken to replace Section 93 in the Punjab by a popular Government. The Muslim League is in a position to form a ministry and to command a majority in the provincial Legislature, and I cannot see how the Governor can continue to resist the normal application of constitutional methods. The refusal of the Governor to allow the Muslim League to form a ministry directly helps the other parties to maintain their intransigent attitude. The argument is sometimes advanced that as the formation of a ministry by majority party is not likely to accord with the wishes of the minorities who will create disturbances, the majority party should not be allowed to form a ministry at all. You will appreciate that such an argument, if applied generally, will place a decisive weapon in the hands of minorities all over the country, who will thus be able to prevent the majority parties effectively from forming a Government in any Province by threatening a disturbance of the peace. This, you will agree, would be an impossible proposition.

I shall be glad to see you at any time convenient if any of the points raised in this letter require further elucidation or discussion.

Yours sincerely,
Liaquat Ali Khan

¹ The noting by Jenkins in the margin reads '14 are British, I think'.

18. Jenkins Denies Charges Laid upon Him by Liaquat Ali

Extract from a Note by Evan Jenkins Commenting on a Letter by Liaquat Ali Khan to Louis Mountbatten, 16 April 1947

IOR, R/3/190, Acc. No. 3415, NAI.

...(4) We are dealing with the aftermath of very serious disturbances. In one Police Station alone of the Rawalpindi district the Police tell me that they are investigating 500 murders. It is quite impossible for me to declare an amnesty, nor can I permit people to retain looted property, abducted women, and so on. In one village of the Attock district the Police found 30 lorry loads of loot.

(5) The cadres of the Punjab services are mixed, and it is impossible to guarantee that the Muslims will have their full share of senior appointments. I cannot pass over senior British and non-Muslim officials to make room for Muslims. Of the 29 districts, 10 are held by British officers, 9 by Muslims and 10 by Hindus or Sikhs. There is one Muslim Commissioner, who is on leave. He happens to be quite incompetent. The Chief Secretary is a Muslim. The investigation staff is an improvization. We asked all suitable retired officers to join it, but the Muslims have mostly refused. The IG of Police has his eye on this, since the staff is not yet complete.

(6) It is untrue that the officials are hostile to the Muslims. They have been deeply shocked both by the atrocities committed in the rural areas and by the complacency of the League. Scott, DIG, Rawalpindi, a good officer but no politician, gave an interview to some journalists at which he unwisely expressed his disgust.

(7) It is untrue that our censorship is worked with intentional partiality. We are frequently defeated by clever journalists.

(8) Everything possible is being done to keep the Sikhs and Hindus quiet. The Kirpan question has already been explained to HE. Briefly, the Sikhs have had the legal right to carry swords since 1924, and it would be most unwise to take them on on this issue immediately. The only possibility would be to allow the Muslims to carry swords. HE has already told me that he does not *prima facie* favour this and has instructed me, to refer the matter to him if it is proposed to give any concession to the Muslims.

(9) For what object the British officials in the Punjab, including myself, are 'fostering chaos' I do not know. Every British official in the ICS and IP in the Punjab, including myself, would be very glad to leave it tomorrow. With two or three possible exceptions no British official intends to remain in the Punjab after the transfer of power. Six months ago the position was quite different; but we feel now that we are dealing with people who are out to destroy themselves, and that in the absence of some reasonable agreement between them the average official will have to spend his life in a communal civil war.

(10) The Punjab is not now in a constitutional, but in a revolutionary situation. If a Muslim League Government were formed tomorrow, it would be attacked by the non-Muslims, and

particularly the Sikhs, with a violence which might prove uncontrollable and would certainly involve frightful slaughter by Police and troops. If Mr Liaquat Ali Khan means to start an agitation against authority in the Punjab, he will produce very much the same result. He might be reminded that it was the Muslim League, and not the non-Muslims, who first attempted to dislodge a Ministry by force.

Jenkins

19. 'Communal Harmony behind Swords'

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 17 April 1947.

(By Mr K.L. Rallia Ram)

The recent happenings in this land and elsewhere need no comment. They are too painful and too distressing to have any further reference. Suffice it to say that anyone with a little insight into the working of the human mind, could clearly foresee that trouble was brewing and that bad days were ahead....

The spirit of vindictiveness has been abroad in its worst term. For the sins of the miscreants belonging to the place are punished the innocent people living at a distance of hundreds of miles....

Amidst these ghastly scenes which the country has witnessed there have been innumerable cases, of mutual goodwill, extending of protection, help and succour by members of all communities. Here are some illustrations indicative of their loyalty and friendship during the dark days, which fill one with great hope as to the future of the country. Inside Shahalini Gate there is a small mohalla named as Jaure Mori. In that vicinity there is a mosque with a sprinkling of Muslim families. It is completely surrounded by Hindu habitation. The Muslims were all protected and cared for by them. Similarly, between Chauk Rang Mahal where 'two empires meet' and Mochi Gate there is a Hindu mohalla called Pipal Whera. It is pinned by Muslim neighbours on all sides. At the very outbreak of hostilities, Hindus were given an assurance which was very faithfully adhered to by the Muslim friends that the Muslims would protect them the same way as they would do their own. Many other instances could be quoted to prove that there are people who want to live peacefully with one another and recognize the rights of citizenship and fellowship. They seem to fully realize that lives of the people belonging to different religions are so interwoven that they cannot do without each other's co-operation, help and friendly social dealings. This temporary insanity has come over a section of the people who have committed such horrible crimes. Hitler's satanic act of raiding the civil population has perhaps unconsciously influenced some of them. The world is much nearer in thought and action today than it was ever. 'Evil and good' of one country or group of countries develop and travel. It is hoped that people will learn a lesson and that evil doers will get an exemplary punishment and a strong and healthy public opinion will be created which will serve as a sentinel and guard against perpetrations of such atrocities. No one will try to stab another in broad daylight unless he felt and knew that the people around him would give him moral support and thus be a party to it. Let the leaders who have created this atmosphere and have built for themselves an imaginary Utopia sit down, calmly and coolly and analyse various issues with which they are obsessed and find out a solution. Such an opportunity is opened to them now. The Constituent Assembly is at work. That is the place where they can settle their differences and propose safeguards, if they need any in getting loaves and fishes for

their respective communities. Let them place the interest of the country at large above their own selfish ends. That will surely lead them to the desired goal of freedom and independence. We talk of reforms and post-war achievements. We have not touched even the fringe of them. So much has got to be done to make India a self-sufficient and self-reliant country that it will mean hard work, labour and sacrifice of disinterested and unselfish people all over the country for many many years to come as yet. Let us get to work and forget the past and let us all be permeated with the spirit of 'forgive and forget'.

20. Report from Punjab Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Punjab for the First Half of April 1947, 19 April 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.

1. POLITICAL: The situation in the Punjab has shown no signs of improvement so far during the month of April. There have been two serious communal outbreaks, one in the Gurgaon district and the other in Amritsar City and many incidents of stabbing and arson have taken place in other districts. In Gurgaon, the Meos were in conflict with Ahirs, the Jats and the Gujjars, and five villages were destroyed and many more people were murdered. The conduct of the people was such as to make it safe to say that for more than a century comparable scenes of open community warfare have not been witnessed in that area. In Amritsar, Muslims and Sikhs were again the main contestants, though Hindus did not emerge unscathed, and, in four days, twenty two persons lost their lives and eighty one were injured. The happenings in both places showed that a desire to avoid conflict on the part of many persons of all the communities is lacking and demonstrated that trivial incidents can cause conflagration in which the innocent suffer as much as those who deserve to pay the price of folly more. The official figures of casualties for this Province since trouble commenced on a serious scale are now three thousand killed and twelve hundred seriously injured and of this number any with the slightest pretensions to leadership can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The casual figures are still incomplete and are increasing daily as investigation uncovers further tragedies.

In Amritsar and elsewhere cases which have been reported show that the use of explosives in the shape of crude bombs is increasing. In Amritsar lighted arrows were also used in attempts to set premises ablaze. These are unwanted indications that periods of comparative quiet have been utilized as times of preparation for further disorder. During enforced lulls fortifications in various localities in cities have also been set up and it is generally believed that a constant scramble to obtain weapons, even of a rough kind has gone on. Such activities make it unfortunately clear that the lesson of the recent past has not been learnt and that evil intention lurks in many places. At the same time there is a great deal of evidence from all over the province to show that there is a general public which now exists and almost crazed with anxiety about the future. There is fervent hope—against hope in the hearts of a great many Punjabis that the negotiations in Delhi will result in a settlement which all will accept whatever it may be, and there is not a little criticism of the political and communal leadership which many blame for bringing the country to its present dangerous pass. Unfortunately, the will of the well-meaning section is greatly weakened by apathy and its strength is further sapped by fear which stands in the way of open opposition to the evils which are privately condemned as being most harmful to the common good. As a result public opinion is largely deprived of

the power it should be entitled to enjoy and fails to oppose effectively the forces which seek to destroy.

The political situation has not changed radically during the fortnight. The cleavage between the Sikh and Hindus on the one hand and the Muslims on the other has undoubtedly widened and no fresh effort has been made to resolve Punjab affairs on a provincial level. Both Hindus and Muslims are now looking to Delhi for a solution as one is beyond their own contrivance, and, as a result, any provincial political activity on the part of the League and the Congress has been unimportant and desultory in character, and without the shape of long term plan and policy. In contrast, the Sikhs who have less faith in all-India leadership and who look on Punjab matters as being of vital importance and not as a pawn in all-India negotiations have continued their work of the organization of their community in a way which leaves no doubt of their determination to be ready to meet all eventualities. The raising of the Akal Regiments has made progress and efforts are now afoot to unite all Sikhs so that they may combine to meet approaching danger whatever form it may take. The latest move in the Sikh plan is to have twenty five selected and influential Sikhs working in each district and pledged not to return to their homes so long as their community requires their services. On Besakhi Day some two hundred and eighty Sikhs, including Master Tara Singh, took the oath required of them in this connection at the Akali Takht and were called the Shahidi Jatha. Many others would have taken the same oath if their going to Amritsar had not been prevented by the disturbances which were taking place in the city at that time.

A point of interest in connection with the Sikhs which is worth mentioning is their growing doubt about whether any partition of the Punjab which Congress might try to arrange would suit their interests. They fear that they might find themselves greatly outnumbered by Hindus in a new State owing allegiance to Hindustan and deprived of much of the advantage which the Sikhs hoped Khalistan would give them. This has not affected Sikh-Hindu relations, but it shows how extremely difficult any plan of partition is going to be.

The Ahrars are the other political party to which Punjab public interest is attracted at the moment, to see what their final attitude to Congress is going to be. The present Ahrar intention is to settle the issue in a meeting at Lahore on the 19th April at which representatives of the party from other provinces will be present to state their views. Meanwhile in Ahrar circles there is a threat of open defiance of law to try and coerce Government into granting to Muslims the right to carry swords in all places in the same way as Sikhs may possess and carry kirpans. There is undoubtedly resentment amongst Muslims that Sikhs should have this advantage but whether the Ahrars would attract wide Muslim support for a campaign of the kind they have in mind is open to some doubt, for their popularity with the Muslims on account of past events is not great.

2. LAW and ORDER.—The political agitation and the communal disorders which have taken place in the Province without an appreciable break since the last week of January, directly and indirectly, have had a most adverse effect on crime. Directly the politicians and the communalists concerned have committed crime themselves and have created opportunities for loot of which criminals have quickly taken advantage. Indirectly they have created a situation of general unrest and disrespect for law in which crime naturally flourishes. They have also taken up much police and magisterial time with the result that the campaign which has constantly to be carried on against crime if it is to be kept under control has suffered grievously. In these circumstances it is inevitable that crime should increase and it is not surprising that the first months of 1947 should show a marked increase over the corresponding months of 1946 which

themselves constituted a high record for many years. The increase in crime is in offences against property and person and much of it is of a serious kind. The situation is one which justifiably causes concern and unfortunately very little improvement can be expected until economic conditions improve and until the police are left free by politics to do their legitimate work....

5. THE PRESS.—There was no change in the general attitude and policy of most newspapers which indulge in recrimination against and vilification of the community with which their owners are in conflict. Discouragingly few sound constructive proposals were suggested by the press to halt or to cure the present cult of communal hatred. Speeches by political leaders were unstintingly praised or condemned according to communal inclination, and mistrust and suspicion dominated the tone of the Press, which was inclined, with the exception of the 'Civil & Military Gazette', to print any matter conceivably communal, however startling or patently untrue it might be, which could manage to pass the censor. Violation of pre-censorship orders were by no means uncommon and a number of warnings had to be administered. The publication of six Lahore dailies was prohibited for 14 days and the publishers and printers or editors of six others were prosecuted under PPS Act.

Particular venom was directed by Muslim publications against the Sikh leaders, whose arrests were demanded for their war-mongering activities and pronouncements. These demands received vituperative replies from the 'Khalsa Sewak' and the 'Ranjit', an anti-Akali nationalist Sikh paper, which appealed to Government to bridle such publications. Muslim newspapers were also particularly indignant at the recent remarks made by the Maharaja of Patiala concerning the adherence of his Army to the Panth. Local daily publications have in fact become instruments for the spreading of communal ill-will, and print whatever matter they can to indicate the opposing community is gaining undue advantage. The resurrection of the old and vexed question of communal representation in the Police and other Government departments was one facet of this unending war.

Muslim newspapers continued to dispute the rights of Sikhs to carry any but 'token' kirpans. Much antagonism was expressed to the Congress proposal for partition of the Punjab; the 'Pakistan Times' insisted on the grouping of Provinces proposed by the Cabinet Mission or, alternatively, demanded the partition of Bihar, the UP, Madras and Bombay. Nationalist Hindu and Sikh newspapers, with the exception of the 'Pratap' and 'Ranjit', accepted the Congress lead. These papers strongly opposed any suggestion of a Coalition Ministry in the Punjab and did not favour the suggestion of new elections.

The Muslim League agitations in the Assam and N.W.F. Provinces were commented on by the various newspapers according to their communal views. The 'Bande Matram' in connection with the Frontier disturbances saw the hoary spectre of British inspiration....

21. 'Noble Example of Communal Harmony'

Dawn, 19 April 1947.

(The following letter signed by 6 Sikhs and 16 Hindus has appeared in the weekly 'Fauji Akhbar' of the 19th April)

To the Editor, Fauji Akhbar, Delhi.

Sir, We shall be grateful if you publish the following account in your periodical.

We, the Hindu and Sikh signatories of this letter, live in village Wandshah Bilawal in Talagang Tehsil. There are about twenty Hindu and Sikh houses in our village, which has a population of

about three thousand. As you are aware, communal disorders broke out in several big cities of the Punjab in March, 1947. Communities wherever they were in a minority, lived in constant dread of their life. Reports of several disturbing incidents reached our ears, too. But we shall never forget the brotherly treatment meted out to us by all the VCOs, IORs, Lambardars and Safedposhes, of our village and in particular, the great kindness shown to us by Hazrat Shah Sultan Ibrahim Sahib, the Sajjada-Nashin of Wandashah Bilawal. It needs special mention that when communal trouble spread to the vicinity of our village, we, inside the village, were quite safe, due to the kindness of Sajjada-Nashin Sahib, and the VOCs, NCOs, and IORs of our village. Those of them who possessed licensed firearms remained on guard during nights. And so long as conditions did not return to normal, they protected our life and property.

Besides, there is the episode of the three of us Sikhs, Ram Singh, Hari Singh and Amir Singh. These three of us had to appear before a court in Makhad on the appointed date. On their return from Makhad the party got down at Daud Khel Railway Station, where they met Pir Sahib Mohammad Sharif of our village, who happened then to be on tour with his disciples. The journey back to our village was perilous. But the Pir Sahib and his party came to our rescue and escorted us safely to our village, walking all the 27 miles on foot.

As we were two days late in coming back home, it caused anxiety to several of our friends. Consequently three Muslim young men went to Makhad to look for us and render whatever help they could. They went via Mianwali and Daud Khel. On arrival at Daud Khel, they learnt that the three of us had already left in the company of the Pir Sahib of Wandashah Bilawal.

We, the undersigned Hindus and Sikhs of this village, wish to bring this example of communal harmony to the notice of the Punjab Government and the leaders of the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims and we earnestly appeal to all our Hindu, Sikh and Muslim brethren that the Hindus and the Sikhs should set a similar example wherever the Muslims are in a minority, and that wherever the Muslims are in a majority, they should similarly protect the life and property of their Hindu and Sikh brethren.

Yours faithfully,

(Here follow signatures of 16 Hindus and 6 Sikhs.)

22. Maharaja of Patiala Portends Civil War

Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Maharaja of Patiala, 20 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 192, NMML.

TOP SECRET

His Highness dined with me, and I had a talk with him from 2100 to 2145 hours.

After referring to my last visit to Patiala, His Highness took the usual line of expressing his intense grief that the British were deserting their allies and friends of long standing by their departure from India. He also said that if we were proposing to do that, he thought it had been very unfair of us to weaken the States in the way we had done over the last few years instead of strengthening them so that they could stand on their own legs when we went.

He told me that he had a large number (I think 20,000) of Sikh refugees from the massacre areas of the Punjab, who were constituting a great problem for him.

He said he was trying to keep Tara Singh and Kartar Singh in order, but they were of course apt to be inflammatory; and he told me that he thought that they and the Raja of Faridkot were being extremely foolish in the plans they were trying to hatch (and about which the Raja of Faridkot had told me). He had warned the Raja of Faridkot that any idea that the departure of the British could be made the occasion of a 19th Century grabbing match was out of the question and could not fail to have the most disastrous repercussions ultimately on the grabbers.

HH of Patiala said that although he would do all in his power to preserve peace and avoid strife, he could not but be worried at the prospect of our departure, since he believed that chaos and riot were the least that could be expected after we had gone, and that they would be lucky if they escaped civil war.

As usual, he asked me whether we would not reconsider our decision to go, and I gave him the usual answer.

23. 'Communal Activities of the Muslim League Necessitate Partition'

Letter from Bhimsen Sachar to Jawaharlal Nehru Enclosing a Statement Jointly Issued by Him and Sardar Swarn Singh, 21 April 1947
AICC Papers, File No. G-34/1947, NMML.

PUNJAB ASSEMBLY CONGRESS PARTY BRADLAUGH HALL

Ref. No.

Lahore

The enclosed statement has been issued jointly by me and Sardar Sawarn Singh the Leader of Punjab Assembly Panthick Party in Punjab Legislative Assembly. The statement has the full support of members of the Congress Assembly Party and the Panthick Assembly Party. We shall feel very grateful if you would kindly bring this to the notice of His Excellency the Viceroy provided this suggestion meets with your approval. It appears to me that very early action in the matter is called for.

Bhimsen Sachar

Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,
Vice President, Interim Governemnt,
York Road,
New Delhi.

ENCLOSURE

After giving our most careful and anxious consideration to the issues arising out of the recent communal disorders in the Punjab and the impending constitutional changes in the country we have arrived at the following conclusions regarding the present and future governmental problems of the Punjab:

For the last many years the Muslim League has been carrying on a ceaseless and vigorous propaganda amongst the Muslim masses to the effect that the Muslims of India are a separate nation, and that they should not let the non-Muslims have peace unless a Sovereign State by the name of Pakistan is carved out of the present Indian territory. The League leaders have been further exhorting their followers to organize their physical resources so as to be able to

conquer the Pakistan territory in the manner their forefathers had conquered India. This idea was driven still further home to the Muslim masses when during the last general elections the Muslim voters were freely told that the victory of the Muslim League at the polls would lead to the establishment of Pakistan and that in the Pakistan State trade, lands and other property of the Hindus and Sikhs will automatically pass on to the Muslims. To consolidate their hatred of non-League elements, the Muslim masses were told, on religious authority to have nothing to do with Hindus, Sikhs and the non-League Muslims in any sphere of life whether political, social, or economic. It is this open advocacy of the use of physical force in the settlement of political issues that has been responsible for the recent bloody riots in the Punjab and which continues to constitute an insurmountable obstacle in the way of restoring peaceful and orderly life in the province.

The last so-called Disobedience Movement of the Punjab Muslim League was an open invitation to lawlessness and disorder. For more than a month, the Muslim League carried on unconstitutional and violent agitation to break a constitutionally established Coalition Ministry which had a clear majority behind it. The resignation of the Coalition Ministry was utilized to make the Muslim masses believe that the Pakistan had been achieved, and the day for which the Muslim League was preparing them had arrived. Accordingly, they started a regular 'Jihad' (Holy war) against the Hindus and the Sikhs and indulged in murder, loot, arson, rape, religious conversions and forcible marriages. During this conflagration thousands have been killed, and much larger number have become homeless and penniless. Property worth crores of rupees has been damaged or destroyed. Hundreds of our sisters have become widows and a very large number of children have become orphans. Dozens of our brave and self-respecting sisters, gave their lives, but refused to surrender their chastity. All honour to them for they have upheld our glorious heritage.

These dreadful events of the last month and a half have conclusively proved that any government in which the Muslim League is the dominant partner will not inspire confidence, and will fail to protect the minorities. It is, therefore, necessary to take steps to safeguard, the life, honour, liberty, religion, education, culture, language, and economic and political interests of Hindus, Sikhs, Harijans, and other Punjab minorities and to afford protection to the remaining non-League nationalist elements in the Punjab against the abuse of political power by the Muslim League. This becomes all the more urgent, demanding immediate decision in view of the announcement of the British Government that it may hand over complete power even to an existing province by the 30th of June 1948 at the latest. We cannot submit to be ruled by those who have committed or caused to be committed in these inhuman atrocities in the Punjab and therefore demand that immediate steps be taken to divide the Punjab into two, and if necessary into three autonomous provinces.

To restore responsible government in the province of the Punjab, we demand that as an interim and transitional arrangement, His Excellency the Governor General should instal immediately two or three regional administrations with separate Ministers, under one Governor for the two or three zones of the existing province of the Punjab. We must make it plain that in the existing circumstances we are not prepared to cooperate with the Muslim League for forming a single Ministry for the whole of the Punjab.

Swaran Singh

Bhimsen Sachar



24. League's Claim to the Punjab Ministry

Extract from a Letter from Iftikhar Husain Khan of Mamdot to Evan Jenkins,
23 April 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 624-5.

MAMDOT VILLA, DAVIS ROAD,
LAHORE

My dear Sir Evan,

...It is my impression that during our talk no doubt was cast on my claim that I possess the support of a clear majority of the present members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly. In this respect I would like to emphasize my position that having been invited by you to form a Ministry, it is my constitutional right to prove my majority on the floor of the House. ...

...With regard to the Congress with whom we have to deal not only in the Punjab, but in every Province in India, my position is that I am willing to cooperate with them in the Punjab on exactly the same terms as they are prepared to offer to the Muslim League in the Provinces where they represent a majority of the population. An All-India question, by its very definition, cannot be tackled on any other basis. On the other hand, since it is possible to reach a settlement with the Sikhs on a provincial basis, I have already assured them of the fullest satisfaction of all their reasonable demands in the sphere of administration in the Province. I am prepared to pursue efforts in this direction, but I cannot accept their unreasoning veto on the functioning of democracy in the Punjab.

I shall be grateful for an early reply from Your Excellency.

Yours sincerely,
IFTIKHAR HUSAIN KHAN

25. Governor Doubts League Claims of Majority in the Legislative Assembly

Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Louis Mountbatten, 24 April 1947
IOR, R/3/1/177, Acc. No. 3478, NAI.

IMMEDIATE

No. 82-G. In letter dated today 24th April Mamdot demands formation of Ministry which would evidently consist of Muslims only or of Muslims supported by a few Christian or Scheduled Caste Members. He asks for early interview so that he may submit his proposals.

2. Formation of such a Ministry would unquestionably precipitate non-Muslim rebellion of extreme violence in Central and Eastern Punjab. Conditions have changed radically since Ministry making was suspended on 5th March and we are now in revolutionary situation with all communities preparing for final struggle. Non-Muslims would believe with reason that Mamdot would endeavour to use police and troops to suppress them, and would withdraw criminal proceedings against Muslim Offenders in Rawalpindi Division and Multan. Mamdot would find himself involved immediately in something like Civil War and would in my judgement be unable even to hold obligatory Budget Session of Assembly. Civil Services would be split from top to bottom and task of British Officers would become quite impossible. Some of them including several Senior Police Officers would probably ask to be relieved at once. Your

Excellency can judge better than I can, [the] probable effect of upheaval on this scale in your discussions with party leaders.

3. I doubt if Mamdot has majority in Assembly but if I resist him on this ground alone I commit myself to acceptance of communal Ministry as soon as majority is proved. I propose therefore to tell Mamdot frankly *first* that a communal Ministry cannot in my judgment carry on the Government of the Punjab in accordance with the provisions of the Government of India Act and *secondly* that no move to form a Ministry will be made until Your Excellency's discussions with the leaders are concluded, when the future of the Punjab will presumably be clearer. In dealing *first* I would rub in League's assertion of right of direct action in January and February. Decision on these lines may lead to agitation by Muslims but it appears to me the only possible decision. If Your Excellency could prevail upon Jinnah to accept it the effect would be good. Local leaders are fatuously complacent and if I were in their place I would not dream of forming a Ministry.

4. I cannot defer seeing Mamdot beyond Monday 28th April and shall be grateful for orders by then. In view of importance of this telegram and to save ciphering I am repeating to Secretary of State for information.

26. Communal Ministry Cannot Govern Punjab

Extract from a Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Louis Mountbatten, 28 April 1947
IOR, R/3/1/177, Acc. No. 3478, NAI.

IMMEDIATE

No. 86-G. Mamdot saw me 1530 hours today. He had telephoned during morning to say that he wished to keep the appointment. I asked him whether he had anything to add to his letter. Rather to my surprise he made no reference to any instructions from Jinnah and said that he had nothing to add.

2. He then produced figures for his alleged majority consisting of 84 Muslims, 4 Scheduled Castes and 3 Christians—total 91 in a House of 175. I said I noted the figures, but did not think that a communal Ministry, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, had any chance at all of governing the Punjab in the immediate future under the 1935 constitution. I was convinced that a purely communal Ministry would be dislodged by a violent rebellion and might even be unable to hold its obligatory Budget session. Surely the right course was to await the result of Your Excellency's discussions with the Party leaders. If agreement were reached between the Muslim League and the Congress, we might be able to make a fresh start in a better atmosphere. Agreement might be based on union or on partition, but all parties including the Sikhs would at least know where they stood and might be ready to co-operate with one another immediately so as to bring the agreed solution into force. I thought Muslim League did not realize the extreme danger of the present situation and the risk they would be running by attempting to impose their will on the Punjab without some easing of the present tension.

3. Mamdot said that he personally would have accepted my view, but he was under very heavy pressure from his followers, who felt that they were being victimised under section 93 and that no attempt was being made to control the militant Sikhs. He referred particularly to criminal cases in the Rawalpindi district, the procedure for summary trials, the sword-*kirpan* controversy, the liberty allowed to Nihang Sikhs, the circulation of violent Sikh pamphlets, and the suppression of a riot in the Attock jail on 22nd April.

4. I assured Mamdot that I had no desire to frustrate the Muslims, but was so acutely aware of the danger of a communal Ministry that I would be most reluctant to take one on as Governor. All senior British Officers shared my view and were not prepared to take sides in a communal civil war. Events in Rawalpindi had undoubtedly led to many arrests and prosecutions, but in one Police Station alone there had been 500 murders, and I did not see how retribution could be avoided. The Sikhs were in a dangerous mood, but it was no time to stir them up on religious issues. I did not see what the Muslim League would lose by waiting a month or so for a possible easing of the tension.

5. Mamdot then asked whether I was definitely unwilling to accept a Muslim League Ministry and felt that the Muslims must 'continue to suffer for another month'. I replied that I was unwilling to accept a communal Ministry, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, and that I was sure nothing must be done to impair the possibility of a Central settlement. Mamdot then said that he had already seen Jinnah and might see him again. He asked whether Your Excellency would grant interviews to party leaders during your visit to the Punjab. I said that I thought there would be no time at Rawalpindi but that Your Excellency would probably be glad to see Mamdot at New Delhi. Mamdot then asked whether you would be coming to Lahore and I replied not according to the present programme.

6. Mamdot was rather sulky and hinted at the possibility of a mass Muslim League agitation. I replied that I would sooner deal with this than a fight between a Muslim Ministry and the non-Muslims, but very much hoped that he would accept the need for moderation. Mamdot observed that this was all very well, but the Muslims were not going to accept partition and a civil war seemed almost inevitable. He saw no reason why I should prevent the Muslims from fighting for what they regarded as their rights.

Repeated P.S.V. New Delhi.

27. Sikhs Bearing Kirpans Threat to Peace

Notes from the Home Department, 29 April and 2 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 5/7/47, NMML.

Para 8 of the letter below on 28/4/47

The situation is evidently unsatisfactory and the CC has not suggested any action to improve it. I am myself unable to make any constructive suggestion, though I think that it might have been helpful if Sikh leaders had been able to discourage the wearing of unusually large Kirpans by people who ordinarily do not carry them. Probably in the last resort reliance will have to be placed upon the establishment of genuine more friendly feelings between the parties; these can be hoped to follow from a settlement of political or constitutional differences.

A.E. Porter

29/4/47

HM regrets he is unable to accept the CC's arguments. It seems clear to HM that stabbings cannot be caused by long swords whereas statistics show that most such casualties on either side were caused by stabbings. The casualty figures show that on the whole Muslims have been more 'sinning' than 'sinned against'. As far as HM has been able to gather from the daily reports, the attacks on Muslims are mostly or at worst equally with Sikhs made by Hindus. We cannot, therefore, lay the responsibility at the doors of Sikhs only as the CC seems to have done. That more deaths have been caused amongst Muslims than amongst non-Muslims does

not necessarily indicate the greater effectiveness of the weapons used but may show better marksmanship and more deliberate aim.

In these circumstances HM considers that no case has been made at all for interference with the long-established practice of exemptions in favour of kirpans.

V. Shankar

2/5/47

28. Report on Communal Rioting in Punjab

Letter from Punjab Provincial Congress Committee to the General Secretary, AICC,
30 April 1947

AICC Papers, File No. G-10/1947, NMML.

To

The General Secretary

AICC, Allahabad

(Copy) 6, Janter Manter Road

New Delhi

Dear friend,

With reference to your No. P/16/2313 dated 21.4.47 we beg to forward herewith a copy of the report on the recent communal disturbances in our Province.

This report is by no means exhaustive and complete on account of un-availability of all the necessary data.

These riots or organized slaughter of minorities have occurred at an unprecedented scale. In rural areas of Rawalpindi Division villages and villages have been completely wiped out sometimes with nobody in devastated villages to tell their tale of anguish and misery. Facts finding committees are collecting the necessary statistics and evidence but it will be a long time before their report becomes available.

The riots have taken a heavy toll of human lives and property. The loss of lives can be safely put at about 8000 while loss of property certainly runs in crores of rupees.

These riots began on 4th March and up to 15th March continued with great intensity and ferocity in all the affected areas. The police officers and European officers played a highly ignoble and partisan role in these riots and this factor proved a great hinderance in the way of suppression of these riots.

Communalism in the services and administration in the province also encouraged the lawless elements. Lahore Telephone Exchange tempering with the message of minority leaders has already become a scandal.

It is pointed out that Deputy Commissioners and Supdts of Police of all the Districts in which these disturbances took place, were British. It is alleged that they encouraged the lawless elements from behind the scene.

Along with this report we are also enclosing with a copy of the resolution passed by our Working Committee on the 25th March and a booklet entitled (Rape of Rawalpindi).

Please acknowledge receipt of the same.

Yours sincerely,

Ram Kishan

for General Secretary

Enclosure

Report of the Recent Disturbances in the Punjab (March–April 1947)

Introductory

The origin of the recent communal disturbances that flared up suddenly on the 4th March, and engulfed the whole province from one end to the other, can be traced back to the un-constitutional agitation accompanied by violence at many places and provocative slogans everywhere to overawe and overthrow a popular ministry. The agitation culminated in the resignation of Malik Sir Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana, the Premier on 2nd March. His resignation was so sudden and so dramatic that everyone felt extremely flabbergasted to hear it.

Nawab of Mamdot, the leader of the Muslim League Assembly Party was invited by the Governor to form a new ministry and coalition ministry was requested by the Governor to function as a care-taker Government. The coalition party which still commanded a majority in the house was brazenfacedly neglected and by passed. Naturally Panthic Party and Congress Party could not brook into un-constitutional step with equanimity. On the 3rd March Panthic Party and the Congress Party met in the Assembly Chamber and decided to resist the installation of a purely communal ministry with all nonviolent means at their disposal. While the meeting was being held a huge Muslim crowd gathered outside the chamber and began to shout highly provocative slogans in favour of Pakistan. The Panthic leaders headed by Master Tara Singh emerged from the hall and shouted counter slogans at which they were threatened with personal assault by the hostile league crowd. The passions ran high on both sides but the intervention of the police saved the situation.

In the evening the same day a protest meeting was called in Kapurthala House against the formation of a purely communal ministry in the province. On the 4th March a procession was taken out by the students as a demonstration against Pakistan. Near the Gol Bagh it was subjected to indiscriminate and murderous firing without warning by the police, resulting in heavy casualties. It is remarkable to note that the police never interfered with league demonstrations during the League's agitation which was by no means peaceful. The police in fact used to watch these huge processions violent in character with interesting indifference and some times policemen openly fraternised with the demonstrators. But at the very first non-violent demonstration the police officers rank and file descended upon the peaceful demonstrators with all their ferocity and brutality. This wanton and entirely unjustified firing lit the first spark to the already explosive atmosphere created by the League leaders invective and hymn of hate constantly and ruthlessly preached against the non Muslims.

This pent-up hatred against the non-Muslim at the imaginary and fabricated grievances suddenly burst up and brought down with terrible crash and [*sic*] edifice of peace of the province. A peaceful procession raising anti-Pakistan slogans was attacked by the Muslims in Chowk Mati in the afternoon immediately after firing by the police in Gol Bagh area. A free fight occurred in which knives, hatchets, lathis, brick bats were used freely. About sixty persons were injured and about 6 to eight were killed. Curfew was enforced.

This clash ignited the conflagration all over the Punjab especially in the North Western Punjab. The care-taker Govt resigned on the 5th as a protest against the police firing on the students and rightly said in their statement that they could not take the responsibility for the tragic development. On the 6th March, the Governor assumed the full powers of the

Government under Sec. 93 and the troops were called in to quell the disturbances in Lahore, while disquieting news from Rawalpindi division and Multan began to pour in with tension mounting everywhere.

Like a pre-planned campaign of terror armed hoards began to attack the defenceless minorities in cities, towns and villages of Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Cambellpore, Attock and Multan. Thousands of men belonging to the minority communities were mercilessly butchered. Their women folk were raped and murdered and abducted and their [*sic*] burnt alive and hacked to pieces before their eyes. Their houses and properties were looted and burnt before military help could come. From the details available now it can be asserted that this carnage was systematically pre-planned. Demobilized soldiers, pension holders and Innam Khawars all joined in this slaughter and most modern weapons like Machine Guns, grenades, tommy guns and rifles were used. Treachery also was employed to complete the destruction of the minorities. The raiders collected with the pretext of taking part in Kabaddi matches. The minorities were assured of protection and then attacked unaware and were done to death with brutality that has no match anywhere.

The trouble also flared up in Multan and Amritsar by the 5th of March accompanied by usual burning and looting.

Bleeding and screaming Punjab turned to All India leaders for protection. S. Baldev Singh visited the Punjab followed by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru on the 14th March. Both of them visited the riot affected areas and saw the smouldering ruins and wounded and maimed persons everywhere and consequently had a personal view of the ghastly sights. Their presence infused considerable confidence among the public and also goaded the authorities into strict action for suppressing the riots.

All party peace committees consisting of Nawab of Mamdot, Sardar Sawaran Singh and Lala Bhim Sen Sachar was formed on the 8th March and appeals for peace were broadcast by them but it had not the desired result. Punjab public safety Ordinance was amended to meet the situation. An act known as the Punjab Disturbed Area Act was promulgated and came into force on the 19th March giving wide powers to the Government and police and military officials. Death penalty were provided for murder, attempted murder, kidnapping, abduction and their variants rape robbery and decoity [*sic*] and arson in the disturbed areas. All the Districts of Rawalpindi Division the Multan District, the City and Cantonment of Lahore, Amritsar, Sialkot and Jullundur, Ludhiana and Hoshiarpur were declared disturbed areas under this act.

These measures combined with other military patrolling and appeals of the leaders gradually calmed the situation. Accounts of blood soaked events and terrible atrocities by the endless streams of refugees keep the tension unmitigated as a result of which recrudescence of the trouble occurs here and there. Gandhi-Jinnah appeal though belated may also help but as long as a satisfactory solution of political problem of the province is not found the present submerged turmoil will continue with stray assaults and arson and sometimes open clashes. In the meantime behind this widespread misery distress and destruction and suffering feverish attempts are being made by the league leaders for the installation of league ministry, and regular persistent propaganda campaign has been launched by the league press to prevent any action from being taken against the culprits and hooligans who took part in this wholesale slaughter of minorities....¹

PART OF THE POLICE IN THE RIOTS.

Increasingly impeachable evidence is coming to light of the highly partisan and discreditable role played by the police and some European Officers during these obviously planned riots all over the Province. In Rawalpindi urban and rural, Attock, Jhelum, Cambelpur, Multan, Amritsar everywhere there is found to be the same story of Muslim Policemen and Officers openly encouraging Muslim rioters and sometimes taking active part in these slaughter operation. In Rawalpindi Central Kotawali Police station Muslim police is reported to have revolted against their officers. Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi when implored by the minorities to impose curfew in the city told them that some blood must be shed before the independence of India comes. Mr King, the commissioner openly taunted the people by saying that British and European Officers should not be approached for help as they were quitting. There is evidence to show that the English Police Officers did not order the Muslim Constables to fire at the Muslim rioters. Tehsildars and Sub-Inspectors in rural areas for example in Kahuta in Rawalpindi actually planned and executed the riot operation by the raiding mob. Muslim and European police officers never paid any heed to the call for help from the minorities. It is not mere co-incidence that in almost all the affected places the trouble always originated in places near the Kotwalis and Police Stations, as at Multan and Amritsar etc. According to a statement of Seth Sudarshan when he visited Multan, Hindus openly blamed the police for their misfortune. They said that they could defend themselves better if the police were removed from the scene. Col Dhillon has also corroborated the statement. When Hon Pt Jawahar Lal Nehru visited riot affected area many a representation were made to him by the public complaining against the disgusting behaviour of the officials and the police officers. Deputy Commissioner Amritsar also did not respond to the request of the public in calling the military in time. Muslim armed mobs were killing looting and burning in the vicinity of Kotwali but the police did not raise their little fingers to check them. Even at the present moment in the various cities Muslim ruffians make cowardly assaults on unwary strangers and passers-by in the presence of Muslim policemen. They just wink and nod approvingly and help them to make good their escape. Everywhere military aid was provided when the mischief has already been done. Murder of B. Labh Singh at Jullundur and S. Nanak Singh in Muslim [*sic*] while they were going on peace mission was the result of the treachery and foul conspiracy of police officers. It is really strange that at the time when wholesale slaughter and rape of minorities was going on full swing, the Governor himself thought it better to visit Rohtak to study critical situation where nothing has happened actually.

While the culprits in Rawalpindi are at large efforts are being made to round up and search the villages for illegal arms and abducted women and converted persons. Thousands of raiders are supposed to have taken part in these 'operations' but so far only two thousands have been traced. All these officials who actually connived and abetted at the murders are still there. The names of all the officials and police officers and men who are guilty of participating in the carnage are expected to be traced by the Facts Finding Committee who are on their track. The area in which non-Muslims predominates have been perfectly peaceful in spite of provocations.

Most of the cities are under curfew. Special investigation police staff which is reported to be inadequate has rounded up about two thousand persons in the Rawalpindi division. On account of vigilance and control of military the things are quiet at the surface. Large number of panic stricken Hindus and Sikhs are leaving their hearth and homes in Cambellpore,

Attock, Rawalpindi rural areas and Mianwali Districts for eastern places in the Punjab. Rehabilitation and relief of the refugees is task of colossal magnitude which cannot be done by the public without the co-operation of the Government. At the present moment this is far from satisfactory.

The Punjab Riot Sufferers Relief and Rehabilitation Committee have appointed Facts Finding and Information Collecting Committees in the effected areas. These reports when consolidated will recall the whole tragedy in its ghastliness supported by figures and unimpeachable evidence. At the present moment it is not possible to give actual figures of the killed, converted and raped and loss of property as there have been huge dislocation of means of communication into the far flung villages affected by these riots, especially in Rawalpindi Division. Moreover the tension continues the double-faced appeals by the League leaders seem to have no effect whatsoever on their followers who go on stabbing innocent passers-by wherever they can and committing arson here and there.

¹ Page Nos 3 to 18 of this report have been omitted here.

29. Hindu-Sikh Stakes Higher in Gurdaspur

Text of a Telegram to J.B. Kripalani Sent by Different Organizations of Punjab,¹
4 May 1947

AICC Papers, File No. G-34/1947, NMML.

Gurdaspur district 51 per cent narrow margin muslim population unreliable. Hindus Sikhs combined pay much larger land revenue income tax own more landed house property own eighty percent high sectional educational in much larger voting strength provincial assembly have 66 per cent elected district board members then Muslims grave injustice if district with Pakistan pray have plebesite [*sic*] detailed statics [*sic*] all kinds.

¹ These organizations are: (1) Secretary, Arya Samaj, (2) Sanatan Dharm Sabha, (3) President, Rajput Sabha, Shahpur (4) President, Singh Sabha, (5) President, Jagannath Sanna Sabha, (6) President, Akali Dal, (7) Vice-President, Municipality, Gurdaspur.

30. Partition No Solution

Report on the Communal Rioting in Punjab by Chhabil Das,¹ 5 May 1947

B.S. Moonje Papers, Subject File No. 58, NMML.

THE PUNJAB RIOTS AND THE LESSONS

In the North Western Frontier Province, the proportion of Muslim Population is 93 per cent, while in the adjoining Rawalpindi Division (comprising of 6 districts of Rawalpindi, Attock, Jhelum, Gujrat, Shahpur and Mianwali)—it varies from 87 to 89 per cent. The microscopic minority consisting of the Hindus and Sikhs dare not go against the wishes of Muslim majority, not to say of starting any communal trouble or fomenting any riot. What happened in the Rawalpindi, Attock and Jhelum districts of the Rawalpindi Division, Multan district and in the Hazara, Kohat, D.I. Khan and Peshawar districts of NWFP defies all description. The Muslim peasantry of those regions, inspired and led by the Muslim League Leaders, both political Demagogues and the fanatical ‘Mullahs and Pirs’, surpassed all previous records in acts of

barbarity, ferocity and vandalism, resulting in wholesale murders, arson, plunder, rapes and abduction of Hindu and Sikh women and girls and forcible conversions to Islam.

Before indulging in any sort of criticism, let us recite a few bare facts out of thousands of facts:

<i>Name of village</i>	<i>Name of District</i>	<i>Events</i>
Jand	Attock	14 Hindus and Sikhs were murdered, the whole bazaar, 80 per cent of the residential houses were looted and burnt.
Basal	”	All Hindu houses and shops looted and burnt. 27 Hindu men, women and children burnt alive in a temple
Mathial	”	36 murders, all houses and shops burnt.
Rajar	”	157 murders, forcible conversions rapes and arson.
Parial	”	350 murders, forcible conversions.
Thoba Khalsa	Rawalpindi	152 murdered. 90 women committed suicide by jumping into a well.
Karor	”	60 forcible conversions to Islam. All Hindu houses destroyed by fire.
Dhudial	Jhelum	The whole village of Hindus burnt.
Thamali	Rawalpindi	450 murders.
Mughal	”	140 murders.
Dhaberan	”	About 600 murders.

In the three northern districts of Rawalpindi (Attock, Rawalpindi and Jhelum), the loss of human life is alone calculated to be between 7000 to 8000 lives, the loss of property must exceed 40 to 50 Crores of Rupees.

D.I. Khan	NWFP	About 1400 shops burnt, colleges, cinemas, schools destroyed.
Kulachi	”	The whole town destroyed.
Mansehra	Hazara (NWFP)	100 shops, practically the whole bazaar gutted.
Tank	”	Loss of life very huge
Kot Najib-Ullah	”	The whole Hindu and Sikh owned shops and houses...
Murree	Rawalpindi	105 bungalows, owned by non-Muslims, reduced to ashes.
Kahuta	”	The whole town, market, destroyed by fire.
Nanda	Attock	3 murders and all Hindu houses looted.
Domel	”	100 Hindus' shops and houses looted, 4 lives lost.

To call these events by the name of riots is a misnomer and sheer abuse of language. They are in reality broad-day-light organized acts of gangsterism, working under the instructions of the Muslim League Feudal Lords and grenzied [*sic*] Muslim priests who in normal times, are the pillars of the British Imperialism and lackeys of British Bureaucracy. During the two Great Wars, these henchment [*sic*] of the British Empire, supplied hundreds of thousands of recruits to the Indian Army. The whole region being an arid and barren plateau, lives on the military services and military pensions. The demobilized soldiers, pensioners (Civil and military) Lumberdars or Patels, Zaildars and Jagirdars and Inamkhors, all fell a prey to the vicious communal virus

indiscriminately spread by the Muslim League Feudal Lords, and armed with spears, axes, tommy guns, hand grenades and incendiary [*sic*] bombs pounced upon the peaceful populations. Their sole motive seems so to terrorize non-Muslims, that instead of having recourse to the tedious, hard and ineffective methods of exchange of populations, they should automatically bid good-bye to their parental homes where they had been residing since time immemorial. The Muslim Leaguers resorted to Naked Fascist and Nazi methods and by following a policy of large scale murders, arson, loot, indescribable rapes, abductions, tearing out eyes even of little children, forcible conversions, with horrible acts of circumcision of young and old aging from 2 to 70/80 years, they have for the time-being succeeded in their nefarious designs, within a fortnight of these terrible happenings, about 80 per cent non-Muslim population of these unhappy regions has migrated to Dehra Dun, Hardwar (UP), Bikaner, Gawalior (CI States), Mandi Suket States and to the remote hilly district of Kangra.

In my humble opinion, the division of the Punjab will not solve the real problem. That will be simply shifting the Frontiers of Hindu India, from the Indus to the Ravi or the Jamna. Unless the mentality and Psychology of both the Hindus and Muslims is revolutionised the shifting of Frontier, will prove only a poor make shift and a weak palliative with the result that what had been happening to these 'Gate-keepers of India' on both the banks of the river Indus, since the dawn of Historical times (from the invasion of Alexander the Great, right up to the invasion of Ahmed Shah Abdali, nay upto the year 1947 of the Pax Britanica, will happen to these people on the Ravi or the Jamna Banks. By freely authorizing the use of fire-arms to the non-muslim minorities for self protection and by breaking and disintegrating the power of Muslim Mullahs and Feudal Lords over the ignorant Muslim masses, can we restore harmony and cordial relations between muslims and non-Muslims. The Muslim League gangsterism requires prompt and speedy curbing, and unless and until this is done, the united efforts of all the anti-Fascist forces of the land by the cherished dreams of Indian freedom, Swaraj, Ram Rajya, Socialism and Workers and Peasants' Republics etc. all seem to be vanishing into the air like smoke. Gandhian Philosophy and Policy have miserably failed to achieve Hindu-Muslim Unity, it has rather accentured the communal bitterness and given a fillip to the votaries of violence.

The ostensible cause for the Muslim League to start 'Direct Action' was for the restoration of Civil Liberties and to terminate the Coalition ministry of Sir Khizar Hayat; in the Punjab and of Dr Khan Sahib in NWFP, while actually they were terrorizing, intimidating and exterminating the Hindus and Sikh minorities, whose interests they were so loudly proclaiming to protect. Could Duplicity and Devilry go further?

I am a native of the Rawalpindi Division and during my public life of 25 years, have made an extensive tour of the NWFP and Rawalpindi division.

During the last 6 or 7 weeks, I visited almost all the above riot-affected areas, made personal contacts with refugees of all sorts at Wah, Kala, Rawalpindi, Campbellpur and Pindigheb Relief Camps. Therefore, the facts detailed above are based on my first-hand information.

Stalwarts like Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Pandit Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das and others had come to the rescue of the distressed and bleeding Punjab, soon after the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. It is a thousand pity that much more heart rending tragedies, as pithily detailed above, having happened, no Indian leaders have, so far cared to come and console the bleeding Hindus and Sikhs of this benighted province.

I, therefore, with all the emphasis at my command, that you should find time to come and see the miserable and pitiable condition of the Punjab minorities.

Yours fraternally,
Chhabil Das

Ex-Life Member, Servants of the People Society

Lajpat Rai Bhawan
Lahore,
5.5.47

¹ This report was also sent to S.P. Mookerjee.

31. Report from Punjab Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Punjab for the Second Half of April 1947,
7 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.

1. COMMUNAL: There was no major communal disorder during the second half of April, but a succession of incidents has kept the Province disturbed and has furnished proof, if any were needed, that the communal temper has not improved. The acts committed have been mainly arson and stabbing but the burning of wheat crops has also been reported from several places, and is attributed to communal malice, though in some instances, it is probably accidental or due to village feuds. Possibly the most dangerous aspect of a bad situation has been the growing use of explosives, both to cause damage to property and to take life. So far, with one or two exceptions, experiments in bomb making have been amateurish in character and have caused little damage except to the bomb-makers themselves. This is satisfactory so far as it goes, and it is to be hoped that the history of 1942 will repeat itself, when the swift retribution which attended those who were engaged in similar criminal practices made bomb manufacture unpopular. The potential danger now, however, is greater than it was then for the war spread knowledge of dangerous methods which might be put to bad use now.

The joint appeal for the cessation of internecine strife issued by Mr Jinnah and Mr Gandhi has not brought about the improvement for which so many fervently hoped. This is due to the unfortunate fact that many felt that one or both had been persuaded to a line of combined action which neither individually would have prompted, and to the publicity of a section of the press which conveyed the impression to the public that Mr Gandhi had been outwitted in a battle of wits, in which communal advantage was involved and not sincerity. Both adverse factors might have been overcome if the provincial followers of the principals had acted in a way which provided practical acceptance of the published wishes of the leaders. In the absence of any such reassuring indications conclusions embodying doubts were inevitable, and have added to the dismay which is felt on account of the present situation and the future. Communal apprehensions and community bitterness continue to be expressed in ways which leave no doubt that they are real. In particular migration is increasing and the stories and fears which displaced persons take with them enhance both communal hatred and tension. Social and economic boycott is also extending and is being practiced by Muslims and Sikhs in a damaging degree and by Hindus too. In connection with boycott the Working Committee

of the Shiromani Akali Dal recently passed a resolution which made it almost complete in its application to Muslims. The matter is important for no other action, except open strife, can affect relations so widely, detrimentally and quickly.

2. **POLITICAL:** The renewed efforts which are being made in Delhi to find a solution for India's complex problems are attracting the greatest possible measure of public, communal, and political attention, and the general view is that a division of India is unavoidable. It is accepted that this may result from some kind of settlement between the League and the Congress but that a British Government award is a much more likely instrument for bringing it about. While the public prays for a sensible solution which will avoid strife, and is increasingly apprehensive about the removal of British control, none of the Province's main political parties accepts the idea of partition, as a result of compromise or award, with equanimity. Muslim political opinion is concerned, for it fears that the loss of a substantial part of the Punjab will weaken the economic structure of Pakistan. The Hindus dislike it for they resent being deprived of any of the all-India supremacy to which they feel their majority in India gives them title. They also fear Muslim domination in any area and realize that many of them will be subjected to it if any form of Pakistan comes into being. Both Hindus of the Congress and Muslims, however, await the decisions at the Centre with faith in their political leaders, although this trust is possibly greater now in the case of the latter than the former. The greatest anxiety about partition is being shown by the Sikhs. Their dread is that whatever is agreed to, or imposed, will ignore their interests, which, since they do not possess a majority of their own in a single district, are manifestly difficult to protect. They are strongly opposed to Pakistan; at the same time they do not relish absorption by a Hindu State. Their present demand is for a non-Muslim State extending from the Jumna to the Chenab, and including several Muslim majority districts....

With some uneasiness, the Punjab Congress has endorsed the resolution of the all-India Congress Working Committee which advocated partition as a solution for the country's difficulties. Beyond this, and except for a programme of inspiring unity (in which there is an absence of faith), and raising relief funds there has been little Congress activity, and in some areas Congress has lost ground because of a growing feeling that it is prepared to give more to placate Muslims than the Hindu community can safely surrender. Possibly with this knowledge as a spur, the Punjab Congress has made plans to improve its organization and committees are to be set up in cities, towns and villages which are to have offices and secretaries who will function regularly. Sewa Dals are also to be organized and special training classes are being started for this purpose. An officer of the INA is likely to be the chief organizer of the Sewa Dal, but, even if he wants it, there is some doubt if he will have full INA support for his work, for many of the INA resent Congress' failure to do more for them and communalism has effected both officers and men in a noticeable degree.

The Ahrar General Council met on the 19th and 20th of April in Lahore and representatives from Delhi, the United Provinces and the Frontier Province were present. After somewhat confused proceedings the Council ratified the resolution severing connection with the Congress, and a Sub Committee was formed to consider what action should be taken to coerce Government into granting the privilege to Muslims to carry swords. This is a matter which continues to agitate the League mind as well as that of the Ahrars, but the League has not shown any marked inclination to indulge in open agitation in this connection so far. It is also one which has not escaped Sikh notice and the Sikh leaders have said that if any agitation were started by the Muslims in this connection, they would oppose it with such means as they possess....

5. LAW AND ORDER: Demonstrations, inspired by the Students Congress and leaders of the Communist Students Federation, staged against the Punjab University authorities, to demand the postponement of examinations, defied the prohibitions imposed on meetings and demonstrations and resulted in police firing in Lahore on the 25th of April. As a result, one student was killed and another was injured. Since then the students have not risked another clash with authority, although it can hardly be said that the manner of conduct of the student leaders has improved to any appreciable extent. Since 4th March, when students in Lahore were to the fore in the initial clash with the police which was followed by wide-spread disorder in many places, the conduct of a section of the student community has been unseemly and provocative and their readiness to defy the law has been apparent on many occasions. In the circumstances the incident in Lahore, and the factors which combined to bringing it about, cannot be described as being altogether surprising. There is no doubt that the students would benefit from more discipline, and that a continued lack of it may easily lead them to further disorders....

Akhter Husain
Chief Secretary to Government, Punjab

32. Apprehensions about a Communal Ministry in Punjab

Letter from Evan Jenkins to Iftikar Husain Khan of Mamdot, 7 May 1947
TOP, Vol. X, pp. 646-8.

My dear Khan Sahib,

Thank you for your letter of 28 April. I am very glad to set out in writing the views I expressed to you during our talk on that date.

2. The essential points in your letters of 24th and 28th April, some of which you amplified during our talk, are, I believe as follows:

- (1) that my invitation to you of 3rd March to assist me in forming a Ministry still stands;
- (2) that you have the support of 91 Members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, including 84 Muslims, 4 Scheduled Caste Members and 3 Christians; or in other words an assured majority of 7 in a House of 175;
- (3) that much as you regret the unwillingness of the Hindus and Sikhs to co-operate with you, and willing as you are to continue your efforts to secure their co-operation, their 'unreasonable refusal... to co-operate cannot be permitted to stand permanently in the way of the functioning of normal constitutional and democratic methods'; and
- (4) that you should be permitted to form a Ministry immediately and to prove your majority at a very early meeting of the Assembly.

I deal with these points in order in the next paragraph.

3. (1). We did not discuss directly the question whether my invitation to you to assist me in forming a Ministry still subsists. It is clear that before the proclamation under Section 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935, can be revoked I must be satisfied that it is once more possible to carry on the Government of the Punjab in accordance with the provisions of that Act and I concentrated on this aspect of the situation.

(2). I noted your claim to the support of 91 Members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, but observed that some of these Members might not have decided finally to support you.

From recent statements in the Press it appears that the party allegiance of some at least of the Members representing the smaller minorities is doubtful.

(3) and (4). These appeared to me to be the most important points in our discussion. Your argument, if I understood it correctly, was that since you had a parliamentary majority, you had a right to take office, and were confident of your capacity to carry on the Government of the Punjab in accordance with the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935. I did not admit your claim to a majority, but said that in my judgement a communal Ministry—whether Muslim or non-Muslim—would find it quite impossible to maintain itself in present conditions. I reminded you that constitutional Government by a Ministry must be conducted in accordance with certain principles; and that when any large section of the population denies the validity of those principles, the position of a Ministry becomes impossible. The Muslim League agitation of January and February was unquestionably directed at the removal of the Coalition Ministry by ‘direct action’; at the time the Coalition Ministry had a parliamentary majority larger than that which you now claim, and the whole basis of the agitation was that no Ministry, whatever its parliamentary majority, should remain in office if it fails to represent any large section of the population. The Ministry you proposed would in fact exclude all the Hindus and Sikhs, and I did not see how the Hindus and Sikhs could be expected to respect principles which the Muslims had themselves discarded. In short, I felt that until there was some easing of the communal tension, and some prospect of agreement between Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, the formation of a Ministry would be both dangerous and unwise. I understood that the discussions now in progress in New Delhi might be expected to produce definite results in the near future; and it seemed to me most important that we should do nothing here to prejudice all-India agreement. If the Congress and the Muslim League, and, for the Punjab, the Sikhs, could arrive at some agreement about the future of India, we might well have a fresh starting point in the Punjab. My conclusion thus was that no Ministry should be formed immediately, but that we should review the situation as soon as the all-India position was clear.

Yours sincerely,
E.M. JENKINS

33. ‘Khizr Pledges Full Support to League’

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 12 May 1947.

LAHORE, Sunday.—MALIK KHIZR HYAT KHAN TIWANA, former Premier in a Press statement tonight said that the Muslim League Party had his support and that of his Muslim colleagues for the formation of a Ministry.

Sir Khizr said: ‘A certain amount of speculation about me still continues in a section of the Press. I had made my position perfectly clear in my statement of March 2 and I wish to reiterate that I made way for the Muslim League to come to an understanding with other parties in the Punjab and to form a Government.

‘I had pointed out then that the risks involved in adopting any other course were too obvious to be stressed. For the peace and prosperity of my province I would welcome an agreement between the parties and am still hoping that this much desired agreement will come about. For the formation of a ministry the Muslim League Party has my support and that of my Muslim colleagues.’

Dawn Lahore Correspondent writes that with the public declaration by Malik Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana to support Muslim League Party for the formation of a ministry in the Punjab, the Muslim League Party's strength has risen to 101 in the House of 175 including the Speaker.

The opposition now consists of 23 Akalis, 50 Congressmen (including 4 Scheduled Castes).

If the Punjab Governor can overcome his deepseated opposition to the Muslim League and allow the Leader of the Punjab Muslim League Party to discharge his constitutional right under 1935 Act to form a ministry, he will have a comfortable majority of 27. ...

34. Sikhs Special Targets in Communal Violence

Letter from S.E. Abbott to R.V. Brockman Forwarding a Statement Issued by Master Tara Singh, 13 May 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 181-4.

Secret No. G.S. 265

Government House, Lahore,

My dear Brockman,

I am desired to forward, as of possible interest to HE the Viceroy, a copy of a statement issued by Master Tara Singh on May 12th. The statement was submitted for press advice and was not passed for publication.

Yours sincerely,
S.E. ABBOTT

ENCLOSURE

STATEMENT BY TARA SINGH

Amritsar,
May 12th, 1947

Master Tara Singh has issued the following statement:

Time has arrived when authorities and the Muslim League should be plainly told about the feelings deeply agitating the Sikh mind. For some months past regular campaign of murder, loot, arson, rape, abduction and forcible conversion has been going on against the Sikhs and Hindus in NWFP and the Punjab. The Sikhs appear to have been made special targets of the League terrorists and assassin hirelings. They have been regardless of consideration of age and sex butchered in cold blood. In some cases infants, women and men were forcibly huddled together and burnt alive as if mere faggots. Their Gurdwaras and properties have been looted and consigned to fire. Crimes against their womenfolk have been committed which even the vilest wretch would feel ashamed to narrate. There is no end as yet to these acts of barbarity and the basest bestiality which pass by name of civil disobedience movement in vocabulary of Mr Jinnah and League. The League has done nothing to check the violent inhuman doings of its followers. Sikhs hold Mr Jinnah and the League directly responsible for the atrocities committed against non-Muslims and warn them that their cup of patience is now full to the brim and it cannot hold any more water. They have sinned against man and God otherwise nemesis will overtake them in their mad career and mete out to them the fate reserved by the Almighty for tyrants.

Plain speaking to the authorities is also imperative in the interests of peace and welfare of the country. It is the primary function of Government to maintain law and order and ensure security of life and property in law-abiding citizens. The Government with all its enormous resources in the shape of world-renowned army and police has signally failed to discharge this obligation. No amount of reasoning can convince the Hindus and the Sikhs that the forces of disorder could not be suppressed by the authorities. One also fails to understand why law of conspiracy which used to be so alert and vigilant in the days of Akali and Congress movements has been allowed to fall into disuse and arch conspirators and fomenters of public disorders are suffered to strut on the stage, triumphally issue statements and make speeches sowing seeds of hate and strife. There may be some expediency in this but this cannot be explained on ground of any good to unhappy land.

I am cognisant of the fact that real power to suppress disorders is still in the hands of Governor-General and the Provincial Governors. Everybody knows how dagger, fire and bullet did their havoc in Muslim districts unchecked for hours and days together sometimes under very nose of the police and troops but they could be moved into action by order from higher authorities. This bespeaks of the extreme incompetence on the part of the local officials or their secret sympathy with nefarious designs of hooligans. The Sikhs expected higher officials to deal properly with delinquent local officials and law breakers in a manner calculated to restore confidence of Hindu and Sikh minorities. But these expectations have been sadly disappointed and despair of people affected by the disturbances has found unmistakable expression in the wholesale exodus from several districts of NWFP and Punjab. This state of affairs does not reflect any credit on the Provincial Governments concerned. For the sake of their name they should do something in the matter, frankly tell minorities that authorities are helpless and that they should cease to look to them for their protection and should devise measures for their safety independently without relying upon the Government support. I assure the authorities that if the police and army allow them to act freely and do not subject them to double tyranny of hooligans and police, Sikhs can ensure complete peace and tranquillity within few days. Then if they suffered any losses in this voluntary undertaking they would not in any way blame the authorities but rather thank them for concession made on their seriously considered demand.

A word now to Sikhs. I congratulate you on exemplary patience and fortitude you have shown so far under the gravest provocations wantonly offered both by the League *goondas* and several policemen and officials day after day. I know you suffered wrongs and when you turned to police officials for redress you were mocked, insulted and instead of meeting with human sympathy and ordinary courtesy you got rebukes and rebuffs. The *goondas* have grown so bold in view of the active support or culpable connivance of their brethren who predominate in police that they have dared daily [to] commit outrages on your persons and Kirpans in the very city or holy of holiest where you must come impelled by religious sentiments or commercial or domestic needs and where you must expect to be best protected of all places in the world. That Sikhs fall victims to daggers of assassins in this city is extremely provocative and matter for deep shame for the Sikhs. You have as enjoined acted under remarkable restraint so long. Though this conduct has seriously affected your reputation as brave people whom none may touch without grief it has served one very great useful purpose. You have tried to maintain peace and have proved yourselves to be forbearing party in eyes of world. I recognize there is a limit to everything and you can now no longer control yourself as you feel that there is

well planned scheme of extermination in operation against you. Moreover thought is goading you to exasperation that wrong interpretations are being put on your peaceful conduct and it is being assumed that you can also bear slavery in Pakistan and it is being seriously considered that districts like Lahore, Gujranwala, Lyallpur, Montgomery, and other places which bear imperishable imprint of Sikh glory, history, enterprise and industry upon them can be safely dragged into Pakistan. I realize my grave responsibility in the present hour and urged by sheer sense of duty to my country and community I am making my last appeal to the Government and the Muslim League to save the situation which has grown explosive in the highest degree.

35. Tara Singh Rejects the Gandhi–Jinnah Peace Appeal¹

Extract from a Letter from Tara Singh to S.E. Abbott, 13 May 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 194–5.

Dear Mr Abbott,

...I may say also that I shall not be a party to any hypocritical statement like that issued recently by Mahatma Gandhi and Mr Jinnah with the bitter result known to the world. I do not like to see a single innocent person murdered and shall do my utmost to prevent such murders whenever I find the Sikhs as aggressors. But so far the Sikhs have been aggressors nowhere....

I may repeat that I shall come to see His Excellency as soon as possible with the object of being useful to His Excellency's efforts to re-establish peace; but I shall join no Conference with the Muslim Leaguers held for the purpose of anything, even establishing peace, for I have not the least faith in their sincerity.

Yours sincerely,
TARA SINGH

¹ For more on the Gandhi–Jinnah appeal, see Chapter Four.

36. Problems regarding the Formation of a League Ministry in Punjab

Extract from a Letter from Evan Jenkins to Louis Mountbatten, 14 May 1947

Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 184–92.

Secret
No. 674

Government House, Lahore

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Mamdot has returned to the charge after his consultation with Jinnah in Delhi. I enclose a copy of his letter to me of 14th May, to which I have so far sent only a formal acknowledgement. In the original letter the paragraphs are not numbered; in the copy I have numbered the paragraphs for purposes of reference....

Yours sincerely,
E.M. JENKINS

ENCLOSURE

MAMDOT TO JENKINS

Mamdot Villa, Davis Road, Lahore
May 14th, 1947

My dear Sir Evan,

Thank you for your letter of May 7th 1947.

It appears that the position I took in my interview with you on the 28th of April has not been fully appreciated by you, nor can I agree with some of the conclusions that you have drawn in your letter.

[2.] I am surprised that you should have any doubt as to the subsistence of your invitation to me to assist you in the formation of a Ministry. I believe the reason that this matter was never directly discussed by us in our talks was that we were both acting on the assumption that your invitation continued. This is implied in my letter of April 23rd to you, on the basis of which we met on the 28th. But I think all doubt on this matter is resolved by a perusal of your letter to me dated March 5th, 1947, in which you emphasized the urgency of the 'establishment of a stable Ministry in the Punjab' and you expressed the hope 'that within the next few days' I 'will be able to let' you 'have proposals much more definite' than those contained in my letter of March 5th, 1947 to you. You also requested me to comply with certain stipulations which would satisfy you that I possessed the support of a majority of members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly. Unless it was assumed that your invitation to me to form a Ministry continued, there could have been little purpose in your stipulating certain conditions, and in your request that I should submit more definite proposals. I must remind Your Excellency that your letter of March 5th, 1947 was written to me after the promulgation of Section 93 and therefore you must have weighed all the constitutional aspects of the situation before asking me to continue my efforts for the formation of a Ministry in the Punjab.

[3.] I find it necessary to question again the grounds on which any reasonable doubt can be entertained about my having the support of an absolute majority of the members of the Punjab Assembly. In my last interview with you, I claimed the support of 91 members of the House, and I was in a position to produce written statements to this effect by 10 members, apart from the 81 who owed allegiance to the Muslim League Party in the Assembly. I am not aware of any other method by which support to a Ministry can be assessed, quite apart from the fact that under normal constitutional procedure, the word of the leader of a Party, who is called upon to form a Ministry is not questioned except on the floor of the House. It is, of course, not possible for me to resolve hypothetical doubts in Your Excellency's mind, and I can only hope that Your Excellency will ultimately be persuaded to repose confidence in the democratic verdict of the Legislature. I would also like to point out that the press statements issued by certain members of the Punjab Assembly representing the smaller minorities, referred to in your letter, do not cast doubt on the assurance of their support to me, but in fact confirm it, as is apparent from the recent statements of Mr Singha and Mr Gibbon.

Since our last interview, however, the position has been further clarified by the declaration of Malik Sir Khizr Hayat Khan issued to the Press on 11.5.1947, in which he has pledged the unequivocal support of his colleagues and himself to the Muslim League in the formation of a Ministry. Despite your doubts, I had always counted on their cooperation, and I am now in a position to claim the support of 98 members in a house of 175, or in other words, an assured

majority of 21, which is a larger parliamentary majority than was claimed and enjoyed by any party in the House since the elections held to the Punjab Legislative Assembly in February 1946. I cannot, therefore, believe that Your Excellency has any further doubts as to my possession of an absolute majority in the House, or in my ability to form at least as stable a Ministry as the Punjab has known during the term of your office as Governor.

[4.] In the last paragraph of your letter, Your Excellency has alluded to certain general constitutional principles according to which democratic Governments under the Government of India Act 1935 are to be conducted. Unless the Government of India Act has introduced a departure in the normal functioning of parliamentary democracy as it is known to the world, the only test of the formation of a Government is the ability of one party or a coalition of parties in a Legislature to command the support of a majority of members in it. The mere fact that a minority in the Legislature and in the country is incited or determined to question the normal functioning of parliamentary Government by majority rule, and has expressed an intention to fight against a Government established by law by creating chaos and bloodshed in the country, cannot bring about a voluntary abdication of the machinery of democracy. I hope Your Excellency will agree that to submit to threats of violent resistance would be to introduce a very dangerous precedent in the politics of India, and would in fact be a direct encouragement to all minorities, wherever they are placed to resort to methods of lawlessness and intimidation. To accept the argument of chaos would be to destroy all possibility of peaceful democratic administration not only in the Punjab, but all over India.

I find it impossible to agree with the conditions you suggest must be fulfilled before the Government of India Act 1935 can be allowed to function. The Government of India Act contains a series of mandatory provisions, which must be adhered to in certain circumstances contemplated by the Act, and its validity cannot depend on the prior agreement of certain parties to regulate their affairs according to it. To accept the latter proposition would be to reduce the Government of India Act 1935 to a series of proposals on the lines of the Cabinet Mission proposals of May 16th, 1946, which can become binding only when they are agreed to, and then only for the parties which agree to them. Therefore, I submit that under the Government of India Act you have no choice except to apply provisions of the Act to the situation in the Punjab, which in the present context means that if you are satisfied that I, as the leader of the Muslim League Party, have the support of an absolute and stable majority in the House, I must be allowed to form a Ministry in the Punjab to replace the temporary expedient of Section 93 administration.

[5.] There is a suggestion in Your Excellency's letter which I feel bound to answer, although it has no direct reference to the question of Ministry formation in the Punjab, but which has considerable political significance. I must deny that 'the Muslim League agitation of January and February was unquestionably directed at the removal of the Coalition Ministry by "direct action".' Your Excellency must recollect that immediately prior to the movement referred to above, the Committee of Action of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League made it clear in an official statement that it was no part of its intention to upset the Unionist Ministry by methods other than constitutional, but that its fight was against the imposition of unwarranted restrictions on civil liberties, which equally affected all freedom loving people in the Punjab. After the arrest of the Muslim leaders, this point was reiterated again and again by the All India High Command of the Muslim League, including Qaid-Azam M.A. Jinnah. The nature, as well as the objectives of the Muslim League agitation was clearly reflected in the manner in which the agitation was called off when a settlement was reached with the Government on the issue of

civil liberties. A movement to overthrow the Ministry would have only been called off with the overthrow of the Ministry. No one was in a better position to assess the cause of the dissolution of the Unionist Ministry than Malik Sir Khizr Hayat Khan, who, in his statement, made it clear that his resignation was due to the new revolutionary circumstances created by HMG's statement of February 20th, in the light of which it was no longer possible for him to present himself a permanent obstacle in the way of the advance of the Muslim people in the Punjab.

[6.] Your Excellency will therefore agree that the Muslims of the Punjab have never violently wished to challenge the basis of parliamentary democracy, and they expect that the minorities in the Punjab, who have ruled this province for a year against the expressed wish of 57 percent of the population of the province, will have the decency to submit to a principle which for so long has been permitted to work peacefully in their favour. But the Muslim people are not prepared to submit to threats and intimidation, and are ready to take responsibility of facing the challenge of lawless elements, and of pacifying the disturbances which occurred in the Punjab on the promulgation of Section 93 in the province.

[7.] It is my opinion that if Your Excellency continues to suspend democracy and constitution at the behest of some Hindu and Sikh leaders, you will further encourage them to follow the path of anarchy, and will render yourself liable to the doubt that partiality such as this lies at the root of the unreasonable and disastrous attitude adopted by some of the minorities towards the final solution of the problem of the Punjab.

I, therefore, cannot agree with you that we should postpone the formation of a Ministry in the Punjab till the All India position becomes clear, because I am emphatically of the opinion that the toleration of a undemocratic method of approach to this problem would encourage an application of the same fascist tactics to the larger All-India issue, and will, in fact, further reduce the prospects of a reasonable permanent settlement.

[8.] Section 93 administration is at all times an extraordinary measure which can be permitted only in extreme cases and for the shortest possible period, and then only so as to enable the employment of constitutional expedients for the restoration of normal democratic Government. Your Excellency, however, suggests that Section 93 should be accepted as a permanent feature of our political life till such as all the problems of our future destiny are resolved. This is a position that the Muslim League will resist with all the force at its command, particularly when it appears that the highest placed officials of the present regime are using Section 93 to coerce, oppress and intimidate the Muslims, and are complacently watching the creation of circumstances in which the lives of thousands of Muslims are gravely imperiled at the hands of organized communal bands of people, who are openly proclaiming and organizing civil war in the Punjab. Despite repeated attempts to bring these facts to Your Excellency's notice, and to warn individual officials against the consequences of this policy, no efforts have been made to reverse it, but, on the other hand, it has been intensified, and the hostility and contemptuous incivility of the administration from top to bottom has everywhere reached an intolerable pitch.

[9.] I have in my letter dated April 28th 1947, already described the efforts I have made to secure the cooperation of Hindus and Sikhs in the formation of a Ministry and explained my position with respect to what you call a purely communal administration in the Punjab. I cannot, therefore, agree to the suspension of constitutional Government in the Punjab till such time as the 75 representatives of the Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab Assembly consent to support me, and I must again formally request you either (1) to give me an opportunity of

finally satisfying you that I have the support of a majority in the Punjab Assembly, that is, in case you have any doubts left in this matter, or (2) if you are satisfied that I fulfil the constitutional and democratic test of commanding an absolute majority in the Punjab Assembly, to permit me to form a Ministry in the Punjab.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
IFTIKHAR HUSAIN KHAN

37. 'Refugees' Lives Broken; Military Terror for All'

Extracts from a Report from *People's Age*, 18 May 1947.

A delegation on behalf of the Communist Party of India led by Central Committee member Sajjad Zaheer and three Provincial Communist leaders, Sohan Singh Josh, B.P.L. Bedi and Fazal Elahi Qurban, has just returned from a visit to the worst riot-affected areas in the Western Punjab. We publish below a report of what they saw and heard by Sajjad Zaheer.—Editor.

We have come back after spending one week in one of the worst riot-affected areas of the Western Punjab—Rawalpindi, Campellpur and Jhelum.

What emerges before one's eyes is primarily a picture of utmost brutality and bestiality, of extreme human suffering and injury; and in the midst of all this, there are noble examples of human fellowship, men of all communities and all parties getting together under the stress of circumstances for mutual aid and protection, of splendid working-class solidarity.

Side by side, there is the evidence of the utter bankruptcy of the political policies pursued by League, Congress and Akali leaders in the Punjab today; and of the provocation, villainy, incompetence and incitement to fratricidal conflict of British officials and bosses.

Perhaps in an atmosphere surcharged with communalism and when retaliation and preparations for 'the next round' are still being talked about openly, one should not speak of the crimes that have been perpetrated by infuriated mobs....

The Aftermath

All over the riot-torn country-side of 'Pindi, police and military raj is complete. Of the hundreds who are being arrested, many are innocent. Many are cursing the League; many have become even more embittered and communal.

There are villages where ripe crops are standing and there are no males to reap them—all males have been arrested. The Hindu and Sikh village-shopkeepers having disappeared from the villages, those who hoped that the blackmarket would cease thereby are sadly disillusioned. For their Muslim substitutes here are bigger profiteers.

In Pindi many League-minded merchants have floated a Muslim syndicate to finance business enterprises. They want to fill the vacuum being created by Hindu-Sikh migration.

Leaguers generally talk only of the police and military atrocities being perpetrated in villages now. Akalis talk of retaliation, Congressmen helplessly imagine that partition and Muslim hostages in Hindu India are the only way out. All apprehend a second and worse round of riots—when the crops are harvested and Sikhs start their communal counter-offensive in the Punjab.

Migrations continue. A tense embittered atmosphere prevails, the voice of reason and common-sense is hardly audible in the general tumult of hate.

Still the common man, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu, in this area definitely does not want riot and mutual throat-cutting—wherever stout-hearted men of all communities and all parties have come forward to keep the peace, the common patriotism and self-interest of all has been roused. It is a race here between evil and good, between reaction and progress, slavery and freedom. Who can doubt that it is the latter which can and must win?

WORKERS' SOLIDARITY PREVENTS RIOTS

We were all proud to know that the organized workers of 'Pindi of the Attock Oil Company Union, the Murree Brewery, the Municipal employees, the advanced section of NWR workers, the MES ('Pindi), under the call of their respective Unions and the Communist Party, not only maintained the utmost unity among themselves but Muslims, who are everywhere in majority, gave shelter to, protected and defended their Sikh and Hindu fellow workers.

White Bosses Incite

Repeatedly attempts were made by the White managers to incite Muslims against Hindus and Sikhs but with no avail.

At the Attock Oil Company's refinery at Morgha near 'Pindi when the workers' quarters were surrounded by outside rioters, who called for the blood of workers of the minority community, Muslim leaders of the Union organized night long vigil, faced the rioters and drove them away. They brought rations for the marooned minority workers, assured them that only over their dead bodies could the rioters get to them.

In Khaur, where are situated the oil wells of the British owned Attock Oil Company, the workers took the initiative to form an Aman Committee of all the inhabitants of the small township.

We met the 66-year old Sher Khan, President of this Aman Committee, who said:

'I did not do all these things but this boy Dev Dutt told me what it was all about. I am a Chauhan Rajput and I cannot allow acts of cowardice to happen here. God has helped us and we have succeeded in maintaining peace.'

Dev Dutt is the young Communist organizer of the Union who had been living in this area (ninety per cent Muslim majority) during the entire riot period.

We met Hakim Abdul Majid and Ghulam Farid, Union leaders, and Munshi Mohmed Khan, lorry driver, and others who had gone round the villages adjoining the oil wells of Khaur and established seven committees there.

In one case, where some rioters had looted a shop, they got all looted property restored. Still, in those villages, Hindus and Sikhs are living, but Hindu worker Kashi Ram, turner of the Oil Company, told us: 'I have full faith in these Muslims, but how can I trust the outsiders, when I know of their deeds?'

Workers' Heroism

In the same way when a mob of rioters came the Murree Brewery Union leader, Shafi with his fellow workers faced them and turned them away. Incidentally, he saved the whole brewery from being burnt down.

Here, the White Manager, Abeling, had told a deputation of workers that the Company could give protection to them only if they left the Union. Workers came away indignant and organized their own join defence.

Among the railway workers one backward section was swept into the riot but on those ... where the Union was strong, union leaders organized joint-defence; fought back rioters and protected and saved many lives from mob fury.

PUNJAB IS NOT ALL RIOTS

Jhelum Hindus and Muslims Jointly Pacify Armed Rioters: Leaguers Save Gurdwara from Fire

The picture in Jhelum town and district is quite different from 'Pindi.

Here, as soon as communal tension began to grow after the news of happenings in Lahore (among the Muslims, the most inflammatory news was Master Tara Singh's communal antics in Lahore), all the parties got together, Leaguers, Congressmen, leaders of the Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and Communists, and formed an Aman Committee whose President was a Muslim Leaguer, Secretary a Sikh Congressman and among whose committee members were Akalis, Communists, local League MLA and Municipal Commissioners.

Together they went round and held street corner meetings, declared that riots were engineered by British imperialists and Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were all brothers and should not fight.

Even where a mosque was set on fire by some mischief-mongers, the Muslim Leaguers asked Muslims to be peaceful and when a gurdwara in the countryside was set fire to League leaders led those who extinguished the fire.

They went into the countryside together with Hindu Congress leaders and Communists faced armed crowds bent on rioting, pacified them in this way kept their district free from communal arson, murder and loot.

Except for a few villages adjacent to 'Pindi district which were looted and burnt by 'Pindi district crowds, the district of Jhelum successfully fought the communal outburst, saved its minorities and kept up fraternal relations.

In many places, joint volunteers were organized who kept the watch, keeping themselves awake the whole night.

When we saw the President of the Jhelum Aman Committee Khan Yar Mohd Khan, he handed over to us a copy of the appeal which the Jhelum All-Parties' Peace Committee had issued to the leaders of all political parties in the Punjab, urging them in all humility to give up the game of power-politics, which has endangered the life, property and freedom of the whole Province, and sit together in order to jointly work for peace.

Many leaders had not even replied to this appeal but Mr Yar Mohd Khan told us with a sad smile, 'I don't mind their not replying, if only they get together as we have come here.'

38. Appeal to Impose Martial Law on Lahore

Letter from G.C. Narang and Bhim Sen Sachar to Evan Jenkins, 18 May 1947
IOR, R/3/1/176, Acc. No. 3477, NAI.

NARANG HOUSE,
LAHORE

Dear Sir Evan,

Lahore is burning. A good deal of it was reduced to ashes yesterday and day before yesterday. Today Akbari Mandi, Chune Mandi, Chauhatta Wasti Bhagat, Kuch Kagzian and Pipal Vehra

are in flames and several other places are threatened. A visit to the town by your Excellency will convince you of the extent of mischief and gravity of the situation. Fire brigades cannot cope with the fire and the owners in most cases, are shot down by the Police if they come out to extinguish the fire. The situation has apparently become desperate and beyond control. We are, therefore, all of the opinion that the only way of saving Lahore is that it should be made over to the military and Martial Law should be proclaimed. Meanwhile 48 hours curfew should be imposed over the whole Corporation Area.

We trust Your Excellency will be pleased to take immediate steps to restore law and order and prevent further destruction.

Yours sincerely,
G.C. Narang
Bhim Sen Sachar

39. No Case for Martial Law in Lahore

Letter from Evan Jenkins to G.C. Narang, 19 May 1947
IOR, R/3/1/176, Acc No. 3477, NAI.

My dear Dr Gokul Chand,

Thank you for the letter you and Lala Bhim Sen Sachar sent me yesterday.

I am in close touch with events in the City, and have myself inspected the arrangements made by the District Magistrate, the Police and fire brigades. The fires have been very serious, but are confined to relatively small areas.

The fire brigades have in my opinion done very well, in spite of shortage of water and other difficulties. The Corporation fire brigade has been reinforced by brigades from the Army, the RAP and the North-Western Railway.

It is not true that the owners in most cases are shot down by the Police if they come out to extinguish the fire. The vicious communal propaganda against the Police is one of the most difficult features in the situation, and is almost entirely unjustified.

I do not agree that the situation is desperate and beyond control. What has happened is that large numbers of persons of all communities have collected quantities of incendiary material, and are able to use it without detection by traversing roof-tops, throwing 'fire-balls' from one house to another and so on. Checking trouble of this kind is not an easy matter, but searches are going on and arrests are being made, and the trouble will be checked before very long.

I need not go into the intricacies of Martial Law, the nature of which is seldom clearly understood. There is no case for it in Lahore at present.

Long curfews have their uses, but are not a complete remedy and cause great distress to the poorer classes.

I understand that last night was reasonably quiet.

Yours sincerely,
E.M. Jenkins



40. Sikhs Gear Up for Communal Attacks on Muslims

Letter from S.E. Abbott to R.V. Brockman Forwarding an Intelligence Report on the Activities of Sikhs, 21 May 1947
IOR, R/3/1/145, Acc. No. 3460, NAI.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE

LAHORE

Dear Brockman,

HE desires me to forward the enclosed copy (prepared by myself) of secret intelligence report sent up today. HE considers that this report is of some interest in view of the recent activities of Faridkot and Nabha personnel in the Punjab (these activities have been separately reported in 'Q' cipher telegrams).

Yours sincerely,
S.E. Abbott

Capt R.V. Brockman, CIE, OBE, RN,
PSV, Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

Information collected from several sources says that the Sikhs are determined on an offensive against Muslims where they are in a majority in the area which the Sikhs are demanding, and against the Muslims in the Punjab Police. The details of the plans the Sikh leaders have made are being kept secret, but there is some reason to think that attacks on Muslim villages are contemplated, and on police stations, and that communications will be interrupted. At first the action was planned for some time between the 15th and 25th May, but it has been postponed to the last week of May or the first week of June. Sikh organization has not yet been completed, but the Sikh leaders are doing all they can to make progress and their Sikh followers are being encouraged to expect something big in the near future.

Hindu big business is stated to be backing the Sikhs. Most of the Sikh states and some others are also involved. Patiala is said to have agreed to supply arms and ammunition as well as explosives. He is supposed to have sent some of his soldiers, armed and in mufti, already to Amritsar. Faridkot held back but gave way on being promised Ferozepore district. Nabha is not in the business himself but his Dewan is and some of the Nabha Sirdars, Alwar, Dholpur, Bikaner and Bharatpur have all promised arms, and ammunition. Kaputhala [*sic*] and given money and shelter to Sikh refugees but is not prepared to go further at the moment.

41. Impose Martial Law in Punjab

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to John Colville, 21 May 1947
SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 17-18.

Camp Birla House
Mussoorie

Dear Sir John Colville,

I have been receiving some letters and telegrams from Lahore regarding the serious situation in the city. Arson and stabbings on a large scale have been taking place, and therefore it seems

the situation has not been brought under control. In fact, the latest telegram from the Governor of the Punjab seems to indicate that the general population, and even top-ranking leaders, are reconciled to the inevitability of the continuance of trouble. I feel that, particularly at the present juncture, the continuance of such a state of affairs is fraught with dangerous potentialities. I had some correspondence with Lord Wavell just before he left for England, in which I suggested to him the desirability of imposing martial law in the affected areas of the Punjab. He then replied that he felt that a middle course should first be followed. And the result was the enactment of two ordinances to arm the executive and the military with special powers to deal with the disturbances. It seems that these special powers are not proving effective, and a suggestion has been received that the city should be placed under martial law. None can appreciate better than the ordinary civilian the difficulties and handicaps of a martial law regime, but at the same time it is of the utmost importance these days that a disturbed situation is brought under control with the least possible delay and with the minimum possible waste of time and life. At a Cabinet meeting, Lord Mountbatten gave the assurance that in future such disturbances would be put down with an iron hand.

In these circumstances, I would request you to consider once again, in consultation with the Governor of the Punjab, the suggestion which has been made to me by responsible leaders of the Punjab that the worst affected areas of the city should be placed under the military.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

42. Report from Punjab Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Punjab for the First Half of May 1947, 22 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI.

1. COMMUNAL.—Following a period when a decreasing number of incidents gave some slight hope for further future improvement in the communal situation serious trouble broke out again in Amritsar on the 9th of May and the city has continued to be disturbed since that date, while the district has not remained unaffected. There was no special or immediate cause for this recrudescence of grave disorder and the events which have taken place must be attributed largely to general causes and to the all-India political situation which in the past fortnight has developed on lines which have increased the bitterness existing between the communities. Some of the acts committed were shocking in their stark brutality and an attack on a funeral party of a child in which six Sikhs and one Hindu were killed has added to an already over-long list of Muslim atrocities. Possibly as a result of the happenings in Amritsar, the situation in Lahore deteriorated a few days later, on the 13th of May, and much damage has been caused to life and property. In Amritsar the casualties since communal trouble started in March have been over two hundred killed and twice that number seriously injured. In Lahore, over the same period, one hundred and ten persons have lost their lives and three hundred and seventeen have suffered grave hurt. For the province the death roll exceeds three thousand three hundred while the injured number fourteen hundred.

In the most recent disturbances the temper of the people has been noticeably worse than it was on earlier occasions and their determination greater. There has been an increase in the use of fire arms and in Lahore acts of incendiarism have been many. Crude bombs have also

continued in use, particularly in Amritsar. Ignoring a large number of relatively unimportant incendiary devices in which chemicals were used, thirty three cases had been registered under the Explosive Substances Act in the province by the end of the first week of May. In one of these the explosive was sufficiently powerful to wreck the premises which were the place of manufacture, but in all others ingredients which are not difficult to obtain have been utilized for the production of missiles of a crude character. In most of the cases, both in Amritsar and elsewhere, Sikhs and Hindus have been the owners or makers of bombs, and Muslims have been involved in only one or two cases. As stated in the last report issued in this series, bombs have caused more injuries and more deaths to the makers and handlers than to anyone else, but so far this does not seem to have had the deterrent effect for which was hoped.

Districts have not remained free from incidents and these and the reports received from district officers show that communal hatred and tension exist in a dangerous degree. Practically throughout the province social and economic boycott persists and the migration of persons whose community is in a minority at their ordinary places of residence continues to take place. In some places tension has increased as a result of the happenings in Lahore and Amritsar and in many more the public nerve is being kept raw by the stories told by displaced persons from the Frontier as well as the Punjab, and by rumour which is in constant currency. The activities of the three communal volunteer bodies in their exercises and efforts to strengthen themselves have also a bad effect. As a result more and more persons are now coming to hold the fatalistic view that civil war is only a question of time and preparations for offence and defence are increasing. The grave apprehension that trouble is in store for the Punjab is stated to have affected business and to have caused capital to leave for safer places.

2. POLITICAL: There is practically no political activity now in the shape of public meetings or other forms of public demonstrations. Political parties, and particularly the Muslim organizations and the Sikh, however continue to hold frequent party meetings at which concern is mainly displayed for matters which are essentially communal in character. This was demonstrated by the proceedings of meetings of the Working Committee of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and the Shiromani Akali Dal which took place in Amritsar during the first week of May. The meetings devoted their principal attention to the strengthening of guards on Gurdwaras, means to improve Sikh mobility and communication and the supply of kirpans and their allotment to areas standing in most need of them. In districts activity almost entirely centres on the volunteer bodies, or private armies as they are universally called, and is aimed at improving organization and strength. Reports received show that both the Akal Sainas and the Muslim League Guards are increasing in size and suggest that former is likely to be the more formidable body at least in the central districts. In some places progress has been made with the formation of Congress Sewa Dals but it is not great.

The efforts which are being made in Delhi and London to help India's political leaders to find a settlement have commanded the attention of all and the outcome of the conference which HE the Viceroy is holding on the 2nd of June is awaited with considerable anxiety. The fortnight which has passed can be described as a period of statements and speculation. The public pronouncements made by Mr Jinnah, Mr Gandhi and Mr Patel attracted the greatest possible interest. By the people who are not politicians and communalists, and there are still some, what has been said has been received with dismay and grave anxiety for the future, for it seems to them that ground has been lost and nothing gained on the way to an understanding. Many still believe that the Cabinet Mission's plan is the best solution that can be found for India's problems, and they see any chance of it ever being accepted and worked with sincerity

fast disappearing in the midst of recent words. Among their followers the statements of their leaders have been well received, and have made a considerable impression. They have, in fact, created an atmosphere in which no award by the British Government in the shape of a compromise would be received by any party except with hostility and condemnation. Because of this those who hope for a peaceful solution believe that embarrassment and worse will be avoided if His Majesty's Government limits its help to guidance and leaves the terms of settlement to be reached by those who are most vitally concerned.

Provincial statements have also appeared and have been of some interest. Punjab League leaders have voiced their full support of Mr Jinnah's Pakistan demand and have visited Delhi to assure him that they are as strong in their determination as he is in his that a division of the Punjab shall not take place. In Provincial matters the League's publicity has been marshalled in an effort to try and convince the Sikh leaders that partition of the Province is not in their interests for it will divide their strength. In this Muslims have not succeeded in their purpose of persuading the Sikhs to the mood of response which would pave the way to the formation of a Coalition Government and, indeed, recent communal incidents have driven the two communities even further apart. At the same time there is no doubt that the Sikhs are worried by the aspects of the situation which Muslim propaganda has stressed, and by the failure on all sides to take seriously their claim to territory where they are in a minority. They are also concerned about the Hindu demand for a Jat Province which totally ignores Sikhs interests. Their present consolation lies in their faith in the strength of their community and in its loyalty to the Panth.

The Muslim League has continued its efforts to form an exclusively Muslim Government and has not met with success. In this connection yet another statement deserves mention. It was made by the ex-Premier and said that the Muslim League had his support as well as his colleagues for the formation of a ministry. It did not state in clear terms what kind of ministry would attract this support. The statement has brought forth a single expression of disapproval from the Sikhs and none from the Hindus. Criticism has come mainly from the League and the papers it controls. From this it seems clear that the League fears that it still lacks Unionist collaboration of a kind which would help it on its way to its haven of communal ambition....

THE PRESS: The tone of the press has further deteriorated, and commentary on political issues has increased in rancour. The nationalist papers, led by the 'Tribune', commenced a campaign of criticism of British Indian policy, shortly after HE the Viceroy's visit to the NWFP, which was often threatening and anti-British in tone. It was taken up and embellished by the extremist section. Muslim papers took no part in this hymn of hate, but altered their tune after the Khan of Mamdot failed recently in his latest efforts to form a Muslim League ministry. The 'Pakistan Times' commenced an offensive directed against the present Government on the 7th of May. A most objectionable article, which was not passed for publication in the 'Pakistan Times' appeared subsequently in the columns of the 'Dawn'.

The campaign for and against the establishment of Pakistan has raged with undiminished fervor. The Sikh press has devoted a large amount of space to stories from Sikh history of heroism and military prowess against the Moghuls. The Muslim press has retorted with expressions of 'grim determination' to resist partition of Punjab, warning the Sikh leaders of the consequences of playing into the hands of the Hindus. The Sikh proposal of partition on a property basis has been rejected in the Muslim press which maintains that territorial re-adjustments cannot be solved on these lines and uses the break-up inspired by Congress of the Zamindari system in the United Provinces ...

The communal newspapers have thrown restraint away in their indulgence in most bitter mutual recrimination. The publication of a cartoon in the daily 'Shahbaz' depicting Mr Gandhi and Master Tara Singh carving up the 'Indian cow' is illustrative of the communal level to which provincial politics have sunk. The Hindu press was bitterly resentful of the implied insult to its religion.

The recurrence of communal strife in Amritsar has been given publicity with headlines which have been unnecessarily alarming, particularly by the nationalist press which has continued also to clamour for the removal of HE the Governor of the NWFP and has opposed with vehemence the demand made by over 300 Tribal Malikis to the Viceroy at Landi Kotal for the return of the Khyber Pass to Tribal Territory. On this particular issue the Muslim papers took their usual opposite line. The formation of the 'Naujwan Pathan Party' in the NWFP to combat the League's violent agitation against the Congress Ministry has evoked sharp comment in the Muslim section of the press, which warns its readers that Congress in the near future will probably employ violence to achieve its aim. The suggestion of Mr Patel that the Interim Government should be given Dominion powers has also been scathingly criticized; the proposal is considered a means to the Congress and to subject the Muslims by force to Hindu domination. The proposal was, naturally, appreciated by the Hindu and Sikh papers, which, however, saw nothing good flowing from the Gandhi-Jinnah meeting, the 'Tribune' commenting that Mr Jinnah had promised to do his best to see that the peace appeal was carried out, but had immediately decreed that the League 'civil disobedience movement' should continue. The imposition of a fine on the Muslim community in the Rawalpindi area has been welcomed with elation by the Hindu and Sikh press whose only criticism has been on the score of Government's 'moderation'. The Muslim papers' line is that Government is showing unreasonable bias in favour of the Sikh and Hindu communities.

Unanimous criticism, rare in these days of communal hatred, was expressed in condemnation of the firing by the Police on an unlawful assembly of students in front of the Punjab University. The inadequacy of community representation in the civil and military Services is a constant complaint which all papers make, and is one which is being voiced more loudly as a result of the communal situation.

Akhter Husain
Chief Secretary to Government, Punjab

43. Uncontrollable Rioting in Lahore: Call for Effective Use of Army

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to John Colville, 23 May 1947
IOR, R/3/1/90, Acc. No. 3415, NAI.

Mussoorie
As at: 17 York Road
New Delhi

Dear Sir John,

During my very short stay here I have been increasingly distressed by news from the Punjab, especially Lahore. Parts of the old walled city of Lahore are being gradually reduced to ashes and there appears to be a complete lack of control of the situation. Reports of those killed by police firing or wounded or arrested and searches made in houses indicate an extreme

partiality on the part of the police. It is extraordinary how the administration, in so far as Lahore is concerned, is hardly functioning as it should. I realize fully the difficulties and the strain caused by these occurrences. At the same time it seems to me obvious that if this kind of thing continues, it will spread with great rapidity in other parts of the Punjab also. If the situation in Lahore cannot be controlled, it is still less likely that a wider conflagration will be controlled. The present police authorities are apparently totally unable to control it and reports reach me from impartial sources that no very serious attempt has been made to meet the situation. Whether these reports are correct or not, I cannot say. But the fact that such a serious situation could continue for days and weeks is bad enough. I would earnestly request you to consider what other and further steps should be taken in this matter. The only other step that suggests itself is the effective use of the army in the city of Lahore with freedom to act as they think proper to deal with the situation.

2. I realize that during your brief tenure of the Viceroyalty you will hesitate to take any new step. Perhaps Lord Mountbatten might be consulted by cable or otherwise.

3. Reports from Calcutta are also disturbing. Many of these reports are often exaggerated and alarmist. Nevertheless it is safer to take every precaution for a possible contingency. I have received a letter from a Muslim friend, whom I consider impartial and balanced, from Calcutta. I enclose a copy of this letter for your information.¹

4. I hope to return to Delhi on Monday morning.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

¹ Not reproduced here.

44. 'Fight Back Goondaism': Patel's Advice to Punjabis

Extract from a Report from *The Hindustan Times*, 24 May 1947.

MUSSOORIE, May 23.—'Reports have been reaching me through both official and non-official sources of the serious loss of life and property which renewed disturbances have caused in Lahore,' says Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Home Minister, Interim Government, in a statement....

'In such a situation and in the present adverse circumstances I feel that the minorities in the Punjab have no alternative but to organize and adopt all possible means to defend themselves against organized acts of vandalism, arson, murder etc. I have never failed to impress on the public the need of constituting themselves as their own policemen or to rely upon themselves rather than depending on the police and military for protection....'

Face It Bravely

'I can well understand and appreciate the desire of the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab to remove their women and children to places of safety, but it is the duty of men to face bravely and courageously all acts of vandalism and goondaism in the spirit of defiance, no matter what the consequences may be. Flying from the brute force of the tyranny and oppression not only creates demoralization but also encourages the oppressors in their acts of insanity and brutality.

'I would, therefore, advise the people not to give way to despair and defeatism but to face this danger manfully and bravely.'

45. Muslims and Sikhs Blame Each Other for Violence and Arson

Letter from S.E. Abbott to R.V. Brockman Forwarding Notes by Evan Jenkins on His Interviews with Liaquat Ali Khan and Baldev Singh, 26 May 1947
IOR, R/3/1/90, Acc. No. 3415, NAI.

Lahore

My dear Brockman,

As desired by HE the Governor I forward herewith, for the information of HE the Viceroy, copies of notes recorded by him after interviews yesterday with the Hon'ble Mr Liaquat Ali Khan and today with the Hon'ble S. Baldev Singh.

Yours sincerely,
S.E. Abbott

Enclosure 1

Mr Liaquat Ali Khan saw me at 12 noon today at his request. We talked until 1.30 p.m.

2. On the general situation he said that the Muslim League did not accept certain particulars in the announcement proposed by HMG. When I asked what these particulars were, he replied that the League would not agree to the partition of Bengal or the Punjab.

3. I said that in that case the outlook was not promising. The Muslims wanted the whole of the Punjab; the Sikhs would yield only about 2/5ths of it to them; and the Hindus would follow the Congress leaders. There was a 'civil war' atmosphere in the Punjab now and all communities were fatalistic and hysterical. How did Mr Liaquat Ali Khan suggest that the situation should be handled?

4. Mr Liaquat Ali Khan said that the Muslims felt aggrieved—they were not the aggressors, but the present administration in the Punjab was bitterly hostile to them. Only two of the Magistrates employed in Lahore City were Muslims; and a relatively small number of the Police officers so employed were Muslims. British officers were rough and discourteous in their dealings with Muslim non-officials. I replied that I had to go on facts and not on party propaganda. The official figures for deaths caused by the disturbances since March 4th were, on 23rd May, 3,410. I believed the correct figure (including Rawalpindi deaths not yet registered) to be about 3,600. Of this total probably not more than 600 were Muslims. Similarly the loss of property was probably to Rs 10 to Rs 15 crores, and less than 5 per cent of this was probably Muslim property. It was difficult for me to hold that the Muslims were not the aggressors—even in the renewed Lahore rioting their deaths were less than one-third of the total number of deaths recorded. I did my best to preserve communal balance in posting Magistrates, and I had no doubt that IG Police did the same in posting Police officers. As regards British officers, I was sure they were being fair; but many of them had been gravely shocked, and I thought the League leaders didn't realize how horrible the Rawalpindi massacre seemed to any impartial person.

5. Resuming his argument Mr Liaquat Ali Khan said that we ought to get much tougher with the Sikhs.... I said that the Muslim League must try to understand the Sikh view—the Sikhs, unreasonable and difficult as they were, had a real grievance. The League had never apologized for the Rawalpindi massacre and the continued burning in Lahore and Amritsar were making a reconciliation impossible. The Sikhs now felt, and with reason, that they would

not be safe in a Muslim State. I believed partition to be a disaster for the Punjab, but if we were to avoid it, all parties must be prepared to make sacrifices. It was no solution to say that the Sikhs were headstrong and unreasonable—three months ago this criticism was justified, but now the Sikhs had a good deal of reason on their side, though in ten years' time the present disputes might, and probably would, seem entirely futile. How would Mr Liaqat Ali Khan solve the problem?

6. Mr Liaqat Ali Khan replied that there would be trouble anyhow, and that the right solution was the one which would cause least trouble. Personally he thought that whatever decision HMG announced should be enforced with the utmost firmness. (Rather an odd suggestion in view of the League's rejection of partition.) I pointed out that HMG and the British element in the services did not want to get involved in a communal civil war, and he replied that we could not evade our responsibility. There would be civil war, and we could not possibly walk out.

7. Mr Liaqat Ali Khan spoke at some length and with some bitterness about Kirpans and Nihangs. I said that by going for the Kirpans I might cause the explosion I was trying to avoid. (I did not tell him that HE Lord Mountbatten had instructed me not to move in this matter without his concurrence.) I intended to deal with Nihangs but was not anxious to publicise the fact.

8. This is a very jejune record of a long and rather rambling talk. The main points are:

- (a) the determination of the Muslim League to reject partition;
- (b) the complacency of the Muslim League about Muslim atrocities (I did wear Mr Liaqat Ali Khan down a little on this towards the end);
- (c) the implacable hostility of the Muslim League to Hindus and Sikhs. (when I said that the Muslim League could hardly deny the non-Muslims in the Punjab the rights they claimed for themselves in India, Mr Liaqat Ali Khan said that 'truncated' Pakistan was a Congress device for the ultimate suppression of the Muslims, and that the all-India and Punjab questions were not *in pari materia*).
- (d) the dissatisfaction of the Muslim League with the present administration;
- (e) the advice that HMG's decision should be enforced ruthlessly. (This seems inconsistent with (a) Mr Liaqat Ali Khan got very hot about the communal composition of the Army.)

9. A most depressing talk. Like every one else Mr Liaqat Ali Khan believed that there will be 'civil war'. He may see me again tomorrow after he has visited Amritsar.

E.M. Jenkins
25.5.47

Enclosure 2

The Hon'ble Sardar Baldev Singh saw me at the Secretariat at 11 a.m. today at his request.

2. He took a very gloomy view of the general situation. He said that he did not think Jinnah would agree to the partition plan, and that if Jinnah ran out, the Congress would also decline to support the plan. So far as the Sikhs were concerned, he thought they would be satisfied by a passage in the last draft he had seen which laid down that the Boundary Commission should, in fixing a boundary, take into account population 'and other relevant factors'. He admitted that the Boundary Commission would have to be appointed by 'the parties', or in other words by the leaders of the Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities, and that the terms of reference to the Commission (which would presumably also have to be drafted by 'the parties') would

have to be considerably more specific. Broadly his view was that the Sikhs would accept the announcement; that the Muslim League would reject it; and that the Congress, though they might accept it initially, would withdraw their acceptance if the Muslim League proved recalcitrant.

3. On the immediate situation, I explained to Sardar Baldev Singh that we really needed more men to deal adequately with the Greater Lahore area.... I explained that though in Amritsar we were occasionally faced with mobs, in Lahore the Police and troops hardly ever got a target. Stabbings and burnings went on furtively and the offenders were seldom seen. If we could employ a larger number of men, the commission of outrages would be more difficult; but there was no real solution to our problem except to round up any organized gangs. We were doing this, and had made a number of arrests.

4. Sardar Baldev Singh suggested that the Police were not impartial. I replied that all communities complained against the Police, but that on the whole they had in my opinion done very well. There had been incidents (one occurred yesterday) of partiality or indiscipline, but such incidents were inevitable. It seemed to me that all services would rapidly be affected by communal feeling, including the Magistrates and the Police and at a later stage the Army. People would soon realize, if they had not realized, the fact that I was no longer in a position to grant rewards or to administer punishments save on a very limited scale; and individual Government servants would naturally look over their shoulders to the political parties and to their future employers. Politicians had stimulated communal feeling in the Police and were trying to do so in the Army, and we were getting into the vicious circle that Government servants were blamed because they were communal and communal because they were blamed. S. Baldev Singh admitted that much of this was quite true.

5. He asked me about Police recruitment and said that his information was that so far we had recruited only 20 per cent non-Muslims in our present recruitment campaign. I told him that we were doing our best. I had called for official figures, but had not yet seen them. He said that he would have circulars sent to demobilization centres so that Commanding Officers might encourage men to join the Police. I said that this would be a welcome move, though I believed that we were in touch with all the centres likely to be able to help. I suggested that S. Baldev Singh should consult the Branch concerned in GHQ, and should leave it to them to take action in consultation with IG Police....

9. Sardar Baldev Singh harped at some length on the familiar theme of drastic action against wrong-doers, by which he meant drastic action against the Muslims. He produced a map of the Delhi Gate end of the City showing the location of Police Posts and the scene of the various fires. He thought we should impose heavy collective fines, and he would go in for the evacuation and burning of quarters the inhabitants of which had offended. I said that I had already approved the imposition of collective fines on the Rajgarh area and on other parts of the city, and the details were now being worked out. It was easier to talk about drastic action than to undertake it. The Hitlerian method would be to take hostages and to shoot them, and I could no doubt improve the situation remarkably by shooting all the members of the High Commands. I did not, however, myself recommend action of this kind, which involved the innocent with the guilty. I had already explained that we had few targets in Lahore City and that the Police and troops had seldom had an opportunity to fire effectively.

10. Sardar Baldev Singh then talked about Martial Law. I explained the nature of Martial Law to him and said that it would not in my opinion make any difference to the present

situation. The Lahore Area Commander was definitely against it. Sardar Baldev Singh said that proposals were being considered by the Government of India for an extension of the powers of troops so as to abrogate the 'minimum force' rule and to permit the Commander on the spot to consider the future as well as the immediate situation. (I had in fact already seen a copy of a signal from GHQ to Northern Command on this subject.) I said that as far as I knew, the Central Ordinance issued on 19th March 1947 gave troops all the powers they needed....

11. I asked S. Baldev Singh to use the influence with the Sikh community to prevent aggression. The Sikhs believed that the Muslims were collecting arms and the Muslims believed the same of the Sikhs. Much of the present trouble was due to fright. Sardar Baldev Singh intimated that he would do what he could.

E.M. Jenkins
26.5.47

46. Press and Prominent Leaders Should Spread Message of Peace

Appeal by All Parties Peace Committee, Rawalpindi, 28 May 1947

S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 98, Installment II to IV, NMML.

Mission School
Rawalpindi

To
Dr S.P. Mukerji
Calcutta

Dear Sir,

You are well aware of the communal tension that prevails in the Province. Rawalpindi has already experienced a holocaust which has completely upset and disorganized all aspects of life. A repetition of it will make things indescribably worse. We believe that every one must do his bit to relax this tension, so that normal life may be resumed. Accordingly, an ALL PARTIES PEACE COMMITTEE has been formed in Rawalpindi which comprises of all the parties and organizations, political, social and religious, to counter-act rumour mongering and the prevailing panic. At a recent meeting of the Committee the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Resolved that the PRESS and the Prominent Leaders of all shades of Opinion be earnestly requested to refrain from publishing or delivering statements and speeches which can in any way inflame COMMUNAL PASSIONS or embitter social relations. The prevailing communal tension is grave indeed and calls for the cooperation of all peace loving citizens to do their very best to counteract false Rumours and propaganda. We earnestly hope that the Newspapers will not give prominence to inflammatory news in any way but will use their good influence to promote peace and harmony in the province.

I am directed to send a copy of it to your esteemed paper for publication.

Yours faithfully,
Bhisham Sahny
Gen. Secretary

Members of All Parties Peace Committee.

LEAGUE:	Mohd Ummer President, Mian Hayat Bux, Maulvi Maula Bux,
Congress:	Yogi Ram Nath President, Bawa Amar Singh, Prof Bhisham Sahny.
Akalis:	Mela Singh President, Kartar Singh Bazaz, Dharam Singh.
Sikh Sabha:	Uttam Singh Dugal, Jit Singh Sahni, Antar Singh
Christian League:	Hira Lall, Gladstone.
Communist Party:	V.D. Chopra, Gurcharan Singh.
Socialist Party of India:	Abdul Aziz, Abdul Latif.
Socialist Party (India):	Bharat Bhushan, Giani Jowand Singh.
Juma Masjid Committee:	Abdul Aziz Khan, Zaffar Mahmud.
Khaksars:	A.K. Ashraf Khan, Ishaq Zaffar.
Forward Bloc:	Kashmiri Lal, Jogindar Singh Puri.
Head Masters and Principals:	Abaid-ur-Rehman (Islamia) Hari ... (DAV)
Majlis-i-Ahrar:	Fazal Karim, Ghulam Naxbund Bagi.
Jamiat Naujwani-Islam:	Aga Mansabdar, Ghulam Mohiuddin.
INA	Jaswant Singh Bindra (Lt) Narindar Nath.

47. Troops Helping Hindus against Muslims

Letter from Ghazanfar Ali Khan to John Colville, 29 May 1947
IOR, R/3/1/90, Acc. No. 3415, NAI.

6 King Edward Road
New Delhi

Dear Sir John Colville,

You will kindly remember my submissions to you during our interview last week about the participation of men from Sikh States in the Punjab in rioting in Lahore and Amritsar. The allegations reaching me in this connection have since been confirmed. It appears that in certain instances men who came from these States to create disturbances were in uniforms and had in their possession firearms belonging to the States. Your Excellency was kind enough to promise to take necessary action in this connection. I trust the matter has not escaped your memory.

2. Much more serious complaints are now being received about the incursion of troops from Alwar and Bharatpur States into villages in the territory of Gurgaon district, to help the Hindus against Muslims in riots and to terrorize Muslim villagers in other ways. It is difficult to obtain any but oral evidence of this. It appears, however, that in the beginning of May a party of Alwar State troops accompanied by some Hindus of the British territory raided the Muslim village of Chundika within the jurisdiction of the Police Station of Taoru and bayoneted a Muslim. I am told the incident is well known to the authorities in Gurgaon district. The ostensible reason for this may be the prevention of ingress of men from the British territory into the States. Actually these pickets are said to have become a menace to Muslims within the British territory.

3. In connection with measures which are being taken for the suppression of disturbances in Gurgaon district, responsible and respectable Muslims from the district have approached

me with the grievances that the composition of the forces which are patrolling the disturbed areas is overwhelmingly non-Muslims [*sic*] and that sufficient patrolling is not being done in those areas where Muslim minorities are surrounded by Hindu mobs.

4. I should like to submit that these grievances should be brought to the notice of the local civil and military authorities. If they are correct, they deserve to be redressed. Very alarming reports are being received from the interior of the Gurgaon district. I hope that the authorities will [*sic*] be able speedily to bring the situation under control.

Yours sincerely,
Ghazanfar Ali Khan

HIS EXCELLENCY THE RIGHT HON'BLE
SIR JOHN COLVILLE, CCIE., TD.,
Acting Viceroy of India, New Delhi.

48. Illegal Detenus under District Commissioner's Orders

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten Forwarding His Letter to Evan Jenkins, 30 May 1947
IOR, R/3/1/90, Acc. No. 3415, NAI.

New Delhi

My dear Lord Mountbatten

I am sending herewith a copy of the letter which I have written to Sir Evan Jenkins. The papers speak for themselves and I need hardly make any further comments beyond stating that this admittedly high-handed action of the Deputy Commissioner has created quite a sensation among the Hindus of Gurgaon.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Enclosure 1

New Delhi
The 30th May, 1947

Dear Sir Evan Jenkins,

I am sending herewith a copy of the representation from the President of the Bar Association of Gurgaon and the Deputy Commissioner's endorsement thereunder, concerning the arrest of some leading Hindus in the Gurgaon District, which were handed to me and which I have seen in original. From these papers it is quite clear that these persons have been arrested and are being kept in detention until they or someone on their behalf give the information required by the Deputy Commissioner.

2. The Defence Member and I decided late last night to visit the affected areas in Gurgaon. On the way we met the Deputy Commissioner who was returning from a patrol. I questioned him about this. He first denied that he had given such a thing in writing. I then showed him the papers. He then said that he meant the note to be a reply to a private letter which he had no time to send in the usual way. I pointed out to him that the whole thing had definitely an

official appearance and could not be treated as private but he seemed quite unable to appreciate anything and was speechless. He merely explained that the Peace Committee had committed a breach of pledge and he wanted information as to how the incident happened. I pointed out to him the seriousness of the position in which he had involved himself, by giving it in writing that he would release the persons if certain information were furnished to him but he did not seem to realize it.

3. I myself feel that whatever may be the facts regarding the incident, the methods adopted by the Deputy Commissioner are indefensible and bound to react most unfavourably in the present situation in Gurgaon District. In effect the arrested persons are hostages for the supply of information which may not be in their knowledge. Failure of peace committees to maintain the peace is not an unusual occurrence. Inability to give information, howsoever valuable, cannot be a bona fide justification for arrest and detention even under the special powers under which arrests have been made.

4. The action is bound to be challenged in a court of law and will attract considerable publicity. It may conceivably have ugly consequences in the District itself. I feel that to avoid further unpleasantness of the situation and to restore confidence in the local administration, the sooner the mistake is rectified the better.

Yours sincerely,

Enclosure 2

Copy of a representation dated 27/5/47 from the President, District Bar Association, Gurgaon, to the Deputy Commissioner, Gurgaon.

Dear Sir,

You had told me of your offer that Ch Jugal Kishore and others who are detained in Jail could see you. I hurried to the jail with your permit but the detainees [*sic*] had already left for the Railway Station on their way to Hissar. I am in a position to state that the detainees will be willing to see you provided there is an opportunity to see you. They will be leaving Rewari by 6 p.m. train for Hissar. I request you to detain them at Rewari and that they may be immediately brought here to meet you by a special lorry. From the public as well as from the administration point of view, it is a very important matter. I am sure if they once see you, you will be satisfied on all points, and they will prove of very great help to the administration in these critical times. As I feel they will be of great real help in the maintenance of peace. I beseech you to consider my request favourably.

A.N. Sharma
President
District Bar Association

PS. I shall be prepared to pay the expenses of the lorry if so required.

A.N. Sharma

There is no need to call them back from Rewari. If anyone on behalf of some or all of them gives information concerning the Narangpur incident, my offer of release holds good.

T. Brandan [*sic*]
Deputy Commissioner
27/5/47

49. Premeditated and Organized Attacks in Gurgaon

Letter from Liaquat Ali Khan to Louis Mountbatten, 31 May 1947
 IOR, R/3/1/90, Acc. No. 3415, NAI.

NEW DELHI

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Accompanied by my colleague the Hon'ble Mr Ghazanfar Ali Khan, I visited certain parts of Gurgaon district today, including the District headquarters as well as the headquarters of the small military force which is assisting the civil authorities in checking the widespread rioting in the District. We had an opportunity of discussing the situation with the Deputy Commissioner and certain other officials as well as with Muslims who came to us on hearing about our arrival.

Our discussions with the local officials brought out a few points very clearly, which deserve to be brought to your notice immediately.

- (a) It is not merely a spontaneous flare-up of communal feelings in this part of the country, but a planned, pre-meditated and well organized attack that has been launched with the object of completely suppressing the Muslim community of Meos numbering about one million and forming a more or less compact Muslim belt in a predominantly Hindu area. Possibly it is intended to pave the way for the establishment of a Jat province by force. The idea of the Jat province has been openly favoured not only by the Jat Hindu population on both sides of the Punjab—UP border, but also by certain rulers of Indian States. A sinister aspect of the present attack is that armed troops from the Indian States of Bharatpur and Alwar have been frequently entering the Gurgaon district territory. They have been noticed in uniforms. It is not improbable that a number of them in plain clothes have been mixing up with the rioters during the present trouble and using their modern weapons against the Meo villagers. The impression in Gurgaon district is widespread that arms and ammunition are freely pouring into the riot affected areas from the Indian States.

The present trouble started, according to all reports, with a treacherous attack by Hindu jats on a Muslim village, Naurangpur, after an elaborate series of meetings, held under official auspices, at which pledges and undertakings were given for the maintenance of peace. From there the disturbances have rapidly spread over a wide area and assumed the form of an offensive on a very wide front against the Meo villages by large crowds drawn from Hindu jats, Ahirs, and Gujars of several districts in the Punjab as well as the UP, among whom are no doubt certain number of trained soldiers, carrying arms belonging to the Alwar and Bharatpur States.

- (b) The military force which has been sent to help in stopping this carnage is altogether inadequate. It consists of four companies with a total strength of about 500. One of them is a Gurkha Company. The other three until today were the Rajputana Rifles. The Rajputana Rifles have a mixed composition but, it is an unfortunate accident the three companies sent to Gurgaon were all Hindu. Today they have been replaced by Sikh companies. There is no doubt that in a situation like this a military force of mixed composition can alone ensure fairness and inspire confidence in the population. What I regard as another unfortunate accident is that the visit of the Hon'ble Members for Home and Defence to Gurgaon yesterday should have been followed by replacement

of the Hindu companies by Sikh soldiers today. I know that there is no connection between the two, but it is difficult to convince unintelligent and panic stricken villagers.

- (c) It was explained to us that owing to its inadequate strength the military force can make its presence felt only in one sector. This leaves killing, looting and arson practically unchecked in other parts. An additional reason for the inability of the forces to control the situation in these latter areas is their inaccessibility and lack of motorable roads.

In view of the points mentioned above I would make the following submissions for your immediate consideration:

- (1) The rulers of Indian States clearly need a prompt warning to keep their civilians and soldiers out of these disturbances. The need of such a warning is also indicated by the fact that armed men and soldiers from certain Sikh states in Central Punjab have recently been mixed up with the disturbances in Lahore and Amritsar.
- (2) More military force should be sent to the disturbed areas in Gurgaon district immediately. It will be appreciated that an attack on a minority on such a big and organized scale in the neighbourhood of India's capital may have most unfortunate repercussions in remoter parts of the country, if it is not promptly checked. What is equally important is that the force to be sent there should be of a mixed composition. This is a point on which I cannot lay too much emphasis.
- (3) In view of the inaccessibility of those areas where rioting, killing and arson are now at their worst, the use of such cavalry as can be assembled immediately and the need of machine-gunning from the air may also be seriously considered. I would further submit that the rioting in Gurgaon district must be controlled immediately, if the Meo community is to be saved from almost complete effacement.

Yours sincerely,
LIAQUAT ALI KHAN

50. Report from Punjab Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Punjab for the Second Half of May 1947,
7 June 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI.

1. POLITICAL AND COMMUNAL:—There has been a considerable deterioration in the communal situation in the Punjab during the second half of May....

Incidents proving better organization have occurred outside as well as inside the two cities. The best examples are attacks which took place at Rajgarh and Singhpura near Lahore on the 18th and 19th of May and at Rasulpura close to Amritsar on the 24th. Rajgarh and Rasulpura were scenes of large-scale and obviously well-planned onslaughts on Muslims by Sikhs and Hindus armed with modern weapons, grenades and bombs. Singhpura was different in that it furnished no evidence of unprovoked aggression but supplied proof of the preparedness of Sikhs organization to meet any emergency and to retaliate with brutal effect. In all these three incidents, in which the Muslims suffered heavy casualties, investigation is being conducted and is likely to result in interesting disclosures. Already there is reason to believe, that the Rajgarh attackers included men of the Rashtriya Sewa Swayam Sangh [*sic*] among their members. It is

known that members of the Sangh are also concerned with an organization inside the city which has been functioning under the control of a Defence Committee which is part of the Punjab Relief Committee. Most prominent persons are members of the Punjab Relief Committee and the principal role of the organization which the Defence Committee controls is communal aggression of a most serious kind. This can safely be accepted as proof of the deplorable depths of degradation to which communalism has sunk in the Punjab.

Outside Lahore and Amritsar, the most serious communal disturbances which have taken place have again been in the Gurgaon district. The disorder started there on the 25th of May when Ahirs who are Hindus attacked a Muslim village with serious results in casualties and damage. On the following day another village was attacked and Muslim retaliation quickly followed. Since then, there has been communal warfare over a large part of the district, which can properly be described as being out of control. Muslim Meos and the Ahirs are the principal belligerents and have already destroyed fifty villages and killed and wounded a large number of persons. An indication of the widespread and serious character of the situation is contained in a report which states that in one day the military and police fired as many as a thousand rounds. There is no doubt that the contestants are well armed and recoveries made of arms include some solidly made mortars. It is possible that these would not be vastly effective in use, but their presence and their obvious manufacture in rural areas of the Eastern Punjab speak significantly of both earnest preparation and a will to action.

The events which have been described in Lahore, in Amritsar and in Gurgaon have had an ill effect on the rest of the Province and there has been a succession of reports from other districts of cases of stabbing and arson. In some districts, where overt action has so far been absent, tension is reported to be increasing and panic to be greater than before. In the circumstances it has to be accepted that the continuance of the disturbances has created a wide-spread and dangerously inflammatory state of affairs.

There has been no activity in the Province which can be described as being truly political in character, and anything sponsored by political organizations has been communal in deliberate effect. Both the Akalis and the Muslim League have been giving their attention to the districts to which they both lay claim, and in a fashion which has proclaimed the determination of each not to submit to the domination of the other. No attempt has been made by Muslims or Sikhs to bridge the gulf which now separates them, and the only effort in this direction which has been made was by a non-Punjabi, Seth Jamna Dass, of Bombay. It is said that in his endeavours he had the blessing of at least part of the Congress High Command, but this unfortunately did not bring him success. His efforts to arrange a representative conference as a preliminary to understanding, and a combined effort for peace were foiled by intransigence, jealousy and suspicion; and may have done more harm than good. It is against this background of the apparent implacable determination of the communities not to give ground on communal issues that the negotiations and endeavours of His Majesty's Government, His Excellency the Viceroy and the Indian Leaders have been viewed and their chances of success have been judged by the people of the Province. Helped by the press to understand the solution likely to be put forward, they have given anxious consideration to whether any plan involving a division of India, a partition of the Punjab and of the Defence Forces can succeed and furnish the guarantee of peace which they so earnestly desire. Their meditations have but increased their perplexities and dread and their search for solace has not been helped by statements which Mr Jinnah and prominent Sikhs have made, nor by rumour claiming to be able to disclose that the private views of important visitors to the Province admit of little hope of sincere compromise. In the

circumstances fear of what will flow from the conference has increased, and with it the panic already existing on account of the Provinces' disturbed conditions.

In order to be able to deal more effectively with any situation which may arise, and to increase public confidence in Government's ability to maintain control, and its determination to do so, arrangements have been made for extra and substantial military assistance. The public have been informed of the new dispositions, and strength of the additional military forces and this has had a steadying effect. The Punjab Government has also decided to take full advantage of the additional powers now available and declare all districts 'disturbed areas'. This further sign of determination to suppress disorder has been welcomed....

Akhter Husain
Chief Secretary To Government, Punjab

51. Casualties in Punjab

Telegram from S.E. Abbott to G.E.B. Abell, 15 June 1947
Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. V, p. 79.

Immediate
Confidential
No. 131-G

Your telegram 1437-S. Best available figures from 18th November to 15th May are 3,280 killed and 1,359 injured. Figures certainly below actuals as Rawalpindi District figures still uncertain and in Gurgaon many casualties removed by rioters themselves.

52. Appalling Communal Situation in Gurgaon

Extract from a Letter from Mian Mumtaz Mohammad Daulatana to Liaquat Ali Khan,
17 June 1947
IOR, R/3/1/90, Acc. No. 3415, NAI.

6 KING EDWARD ROAD, NEW DELHI

My dear Liaquat Ali Khan Sahib,

A party consisting of Pir Ilahi Buksh, Mir Bunde Ali, Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur, Ministers of Sind, Mr M.H. Gazdar, Mian Amiruddin, Mayor of Lahore, 3 members of the Ad Hoc Delhi Muslim League Committee and myself toured the riot-affected area of Gurgaon District on the 11th of June 1947. We visited Gurgaon, Sohna, Taru, Nuh and Palwal and the surrounding villages which have been devastated in the recent disturbances. We went in no official capacity and it was not our intention to present a detailed report of our observations, but we were so completely taken aback by what we saw, and by the nature and extent of the devastation already caused and likely to be caused in the immediate future that we feel it our duty to impress you with the gravity of the situation and to urge you to take immediate steps to bring under control, what, is in effect, full scale civil war raging within 20 miles of the capital of India. If the least delay is permitted in this, it is our opinion that thousands of helpless men, women and children will be massacred within the next few days and an irretrievable disaster will befall more than half a million of human beings, which will tarnish the birth of Indian freedom and shame the last days of the British rule in India.

We are surprised that it is not sufficiently realized in Delhi, or for the matter of that in any part of India, that a cruel and merciless war is being waged at this very moment in the closest proximity to the Indian capital, with all the horrors and atrocities attendant on a campaign for extermination conducted with the most modern weapons of destruction but unchecked by any of the conventions of civilised war-fare [*sic*]. It is ridiculous to apply the phrase communal rioting to the situation in Gurgaon. What is actually taking place is a large scale invasion of the Muslim villages by thousands of armed and disciplined men from the adjoining districts of the United Provinces, as well as by the official armed forces of Bharatpur and Alwar State. It is to be borne in mind that the Meo tract in Gurgaon and the adjoining Indian States is the only compact and populous concentration of Muslim majority population between the Sutlej and the border of Bengal, numbering near 10 lakhs of people, and it appears to be the firm intention of the surrounding Hindu provinces as well as the Hindu states to liquidate this powerful and gallant pocket by all the tactics made familiar by Herr Hitler in Poland. From reliable information that we were able to collect on the spot we are convinced that many thousands of men, women and children have been massacred in the last few days and that scores of villages have been burnt to the ground, and that people in all the surroundings villages are living day and night in imminent peril of attack and extermination.

The most alarming feature of the whole situation is the conduct of the military that has ostensibly been called out to restore order. The composition of the military in Gurgaon is exclusively non-Muslim. From time to time a purely Hindu Rajput regiment is replaced by a Sikh Regiment which is later relieved by the former Rajput regiment. This is being done at a time when the non-Muslim army is misbehaving in a shameless and atrocious manner. In fact it is our belief that more Muslims have been indiscriminately massacred by the Indian non-Muslim military than by the combined attacks of the Jats, the Ahirs, the Rajputs, the Hindus of UP and the armies of Bharatpur and Alwar. In particular it is the common belief in Gurgaon that the Sikh military has taken it upon themselves to wage war on behalf of the non-Muslims. Sikh army personnel have indiscriminately shot the Meos, and it is rumoured that some of their men have actually taken off their uniforms to re-inforce the mobs with their official weapons. It is the common practice for the soldiers to carry out searches for arms in the day in Hindu villages and to redistribute the confiscated arms at strategic places under cover of night, thus securing that the maximum force is deployed at the decisive place against the doomed Meos. Similarly in one place some 600 Hindu rioters were arrested by the military at the spot, but 450 were released immediately the remaining 150 having already passed to the custody of the police. There are at the moment lying in Palwal Civil Hospital 4 men who were forced to lie on their backs by the military and then crushed twice over under military trucks. It would be fruitless to pile illustrations because it is our belief that the savagery, brutality and partisanship of the military is well-known to the authorities. We understand that the DC of Gurgaon has represented again and again to the Central Government for mixed troops but he has been snubbed with the answer that the military does not recognize communalism. This is amusing when it is noticed that wherever disturbances take place, whether it is in Rawalpindi, in Attock, in Multan, in Amritsar or in Gurgaon, lack of communal considerations in the Army means the exclusive presence of non-Muslims [*sic*] troops.

It is our firm conviction that the worst offenders in the present Gurgaon disturbances have been the non-Muslim army, and that unless immediate steps are taken to introduce a mixed military personnel there is no hope for Muslims in Gurgaon. If it is not found possible to secure this, then we suggest that the military should be completely withdrawn, because the brave

Meos would be able to fight their Hindu enemies with better chances of avoiding complete annihilation if they are not re-inforced by their military allies. It is also to be hoped that when mixed military is introduced in Gurgaon it will be done in sufficient numbers to cope with the enormity of the problem. It is ridiculous that whilst it is impossible to see the road for army trucks in West Punjab, it is possible to travel almost right through the disturbed area in Gurgaon without coming across a uniform.

Finally we would like to impress upon you with all the force at our disposal, the wicked role that is being played by the Indian States of Bharatpur and Alwar. As you know the Mewat is a compact tract that covers adjoining areas of Gurgoan, UP, Bharatpur and Alwar, and whilst there are some 2,50,000 Meos in Gurgoan, more than twice this number live in Alwar and Bharatpur. At present these two States have declared a war of extermination on the Muslims of Mewat. As recently as the night of the 10th, whole regiments of the Bharatpur military took part in an organized attack on Meo villages in Bharatpur State on the Gurgaon boundary, killing hundreds of people and sacking and burning 7 villages completely, whilst the Indian troops on the border looked on, only concerned to see that no Muslim escaped from Bharatpur to Gurgaon, or that no Gurgaon Meo should enter into Bharatpur to succour and defend his kith and kin.

We Muslims of India believe that we are one people. We cannot watch unmoved the pitiless massacre of our brothers merely because an artificial boundary divides Gurgaon from Bharatpur and Alwar. In the name of humanity we call upon you to appeal to the Viceroy of India in this matter and to see that the concepts of medieval barbarism are not allowed to reign unchecked in a tract almost within sight of the Viceregal Palace, and at a time when we stand at the very threshold of our freedom.

53. Tragedies of Punjab

Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten, 22 June 1947
IOR, R/3/1/91, Acc. No. 3416, NAI.

PERSONAL

17 York Road
New Delhi

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

You have not returned from Kashmir yet and are due back tomorrow.

I am, however, writing this to you rather late at night because I am distressed and the sending of this letter will perhaps give some relief to my mind....

3. But this letter is mainly about the city of Lahore where fires are raging and consuming hundreds of houses. It is reported that 100 houses were burnt down last night and this morning. During the previous two days about 250 houses were set fire to and burnt. At this rate the city of Lahore will be just a heap of ashes in a few days time. The human aspect of this is appalling to contemplate.

4. Amritsar is already a city of ruins, and Lahore is likely to be in a much worse state very soon. Lahore is, of course, a much larger city than Amritsar.

5. If you will forgive a personal touch, I should like to tell you that my mother came from Lahore and part of my childhood was spent there. The fate of Lahore, therefore, affects me

perhaps more intimately than it might many other people who are not connected with that city....

7. Apart from newspaper reports, people have come from Lahore to see me today and they have given descriptions of what is happening there. Whether their accounts are correct or not, I cannot say. They tell me that repeatedly, when houses were set fire to, the residents of those houses rushed out into the streets and lanes and these peoples were fired at by the police for breach of the curfew order. Most of these fires occurred at the time of the curfew. I am told that the District Magistrate has ordered that people should keep open the doors of their houses and lanes so as to allow refugees from burning houses to enter other houses, because if they remain in the streets during curfew hours, they will be fired at by the police.

8. This is very strange state of affairs and few persons would like to be residents of Lahore at present. Surely, something effective has to be done to stop this tragedy, if existing methods have failed and the police are incapable of controlling the situation. As I told you once, the insistent demand is either for the military to take charge, or for the withdrawal of police and the military so that the people can look after themselves. You were surprised at this last demand and it is surprising enough. But it is passionately repeated. All manner of charges are made against the police of committing arson and of preventing people from putting out fires and firing at them when they try to do so. It is not possible for me to know the truth of these charges; but the fact remains that there is this strongly-felt feeling about the police and further that the situation continues to deteriorate. Are we to be passive spectators while a great city ceases to exist and hundreds of thousands of its inhabitants are reduced to becoming homeless wanderers, or else to die in their narrow lanes?

9. You gave an assurance even before June 3rd and subsequently that any kind of disorder will be put down with vigour. I am afraid we are not honouring that assurance in some places at least, notably in Lahore and Amritsar. Gurgaon also is still more or less a battle-field although similar and adjoining areas on the UP side are fully under control.

10. From all accounts that I have received, the statement of June 3rd has had a sobering and calming affect in most places. Whether people like the decisions or not, they accept them and have a general feeling that a settlement has been arrived at. This old tension is gone or is much less. There is no more talk, as there used to be, of civil war and the like.

11. But this does not apply to Lahore, Amritsar and Gurgaon. Gurgaon is a wide area and already several hundred villages have been burnt down. The damage has been done and, I suppose, sooner or later the trouble there will end, though it is still continuing to some extent. Lahore is an even more serious matter, not only because it effects a very large number of persons and valuable property, but also because it is the nerve-centre of the Punjab. There appears to be a deliberate policy being pursued there of smoking out people. It is an astonishingly foolish policy from any point of view and can do no good to anybody. Nevertheless it has succeeded in a large measure, and if it is continued on this scale for another ten days or so, there will be little left in the city of Lahore to save. If anything has got to be done, it must be done immediately....

13. Please forgive me for this long letter which you will get on your return from Kashmir. I tried to stop myself writing it, but the thought of Lahore burning away obsessed me and I could not restrain myself.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

H. SIND

1. Governor Accused of Partiality

Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Francis Mudie, 15 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 192, NMML.

TOP SECRET

After Sir Francis Mudie had given me an account of how his Government was working, I took him into the garden and informed him categorically that he was accused of being violently pro-Muslim League and of failing in his constitutional duties to look after the interests of the minorities in Sind. I told him that Mr Gandhi had made this accusation as well as other Congress leaders, and that an article by Jai Prakash Narain which Mr Gandhi had sent me, called upon me to dismiss Sir Francis from the post of Governor for failing in his duty.

Sir Francis assured me that the accusations were completely without foundation; that he constantly pulled up his Government and did his best to look after the interest of the minorities; but that he naturally did his best to get on well with his Government, because that, he presumed, was the correct attitude for a constitutional Governor to take.

He informed me that the real grounds for Congress dissatisfaction with him lay in the 1942 period, when he was Chief Secretary to the Government of the UP, under Sir Maurice Hallett, and when together they had had to round up and imprison Congress leaders, for which he thought they would never forgive him.

I then told him that Mr Godbole had warned me that two Bills were coming up for my assent, concerning the alienation of land and impersonation at elections, which were causing the most violent feeling among the Hindus who regarded both Bills as directed against them. I invited the Governor to give me a very full brief if he really wished me to give my assent.

He gave me a verbal explanation of what was behind these two Bills, but promised to let me have it in writing as well.

I finally told him that I accepted his explanation in regard to the Congress accusations; that I realized that political capital was being made the whole time out of the attitude of high British officials; and that he could count on my support. I did warn him, however, to be ever careful not to give Congress the least excuse for accusing him of partiality.

In conclusion we discussed the prospects of Pakistan consisting only of Sind and the western half of the Punjab, and he expressed the view that this would be a perfectly feasible economic proposition, and since the total population of the two areas would only be in the neighbourhood of 15 millions, that is, less than 4 per cent of the total population of India, nobody could really say that this Pakistan was seriously destroying the unity of India. In fact it might be regarded as a fairly large Indian State which had decided not to join the Constituent Assembly.

This opens up a new vista, since now we could go ahead giving Mr Jinnah his truncated Pakistan, whilst keeping a strong Centre for the rest of India at Delhi; all this on the assumption that the NWFP retains a Congress Government and that the Muslim League will not want the expense of trying to run a Province which needs 3 1/2 crores spent on it over and above its income (mostly for the tribes), and that Suhrawardy will not agree to the partition of Bengal and will throw in his lot with Congress.

Anyhow, here is a new plan which we will consider tomorrow at the Governors' Conference.

2. Mudie Presents His Case against Congress Claim

Letter from Francis Mudie to Louis Mountbatten, 22 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 138, NMML.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, KARACHI

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

I promised to let you have some ammunition with which to meet the Congress attack on me that I am unfair to the minorities in Sind. This is not very easy to do as I am constantly doing what I can to prevent their being unfairly treated but I may mention the following cases as being of some importance:

- (1) The ministry unanimously, at a Cabinet Meeting, wished to supersede a Hindu, who had been certified by the Chief Court as fit to hold the post of District and Sessions Judge. I appointed him to the post by an order made in my individual judgement.
- (2) All the ministers, except possibly the Premier, wished to make the rules regarding the communal ratio in the Services applicable to promotions. At present they apply only to new appointments. I refused to agree. So they got a member of their party in the Assembly to move a resolution to that effect. This was carried, all the Muslims voting for it and all the Hindus against, but, as the result of what I had said the day before to the Ministers, they all remained neutral, incurring a certain amount of obloquy thereby.
- (3) The Hindus here give me credit for the maintenance of the peace. This has involved, on some occasions, action contrary to my ministers' real wishes or over their heads. Last August I threatened two with dismissal for issuing an inflammatory statement.
- (4) I have also, on occasions when I thought Hindu members of the Services were being unfairly treated, referred the matter to the Public Service Commission under the concluding provisions of section 266(3) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

2. I hope that these instances will be sufficient for your purpose but I would like to mention certain general matters which are of importance in this connexion. The first is, as I told you in Delhi, that the real gravamen of the Congress charge against me is that I was Chief Secretary of the UP in 1942 when the Congress rebellion was suppressed. Before that the Congress and I got on fairly well. I am not accused of anything excepting defeating them, but that is a serious charge.

3. The other reason for the attack on me is that I have always considered it important not to presume too much on the friendliness of my ministry. Admittedly, I get away with a good deal that I could not get away with if I had a Congress ministry, but any suggestion that a Muslim League ministry should be treated with less respect than a Congress ministry would be greatly resented. The League is, at present, suffering from an extreme inferiority complex which makes them, at times, difficult to deal with. But what the Congress want me to do is to treat my ministry in a way that would produce a constitutional crisis in a Congress province. If I did, it would be a snub to the League which would be just what the Congress want. It would also weaken the Sind Government, by setting the Governor against the ministers, which also from the Congress point of view is desirable.

4. This question arose very acutely last July, when on the advice of the Premier, I prorogued the meeting of the Assembly that had been called to elect representatives of Sind to the Constituent Assembly immediately after that election was over. The Congress were opposed to this, as they had suborned the single vote on which the ministry's majority depended by a promise of cheap land and so thought that they could defeat the ministry and gain power. It seemed to me that if advice is tendered by both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition [*sic*] on a purely political matter, the Governor should act on the advice of the Premier. If a Congress Governor were to depart from that rule there would be trouble.

5. My real reason, however, apart from the constitutional one, was that I was sure that if the opposition, which consisted of the Congress plus a number of Muslim stooges, all but one of whom lost their seats at the last election, got power then there would be widespread communal rioting, in which, of course, the Hindus would have lost very heavily. I would have got the Province into the position now existing in the NWFP and previously existing in the Punjab. I would have had a ministry with a small majority in the Assembly, but violently opposed outside it. It was as a result of my action on this occasion that, as I told you, Nehru, in a public statement, said that both I and my Premier should be dismissed. My action has been justified by the result of the recent election and by the ensuing communal peace when nearly every other Province was disturbed. Many of the Hindus in Sind see it now and are grateful. But a strong Government in Sind does not suit the All-India Congress book, and I daresay the leaders at the Centre do not realize the local situation. Unfortunately Governors cannot explain these things!

6. I am afraid that this is rather a long letter but I thought it worthwhile to set forth the case fairly fully.

Yours sincerely,
F. MUDIE

3. Objectionable Activities of League Leaders

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten, 23 April 1947
SPC, Vol. V, pp. 309–10.

New Delhi

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

I am enclosing for your perusal a copy of the letter which has been forwarded to me by the Leader of the Congress Party in the Sind Assembly. The letter was written to him by another MLA of Sind and it is typical, in so far as it is subjective, of the attitude of responsible leaders of minorities in the Muslim majority areas. In so far as it is descriptive of the speeches and incidents referred to therein I have no doubt about its authenticity. A particularly objectionable feature is the speech of Pir Illahi Bux, one of the Sind Ministers, who has, under the cloak of ministerial protection without its attendant responsibilities, appealed to the baser instincts of his audience.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

COPY OF LETTER FROM SJT MADHAVDAS SHIVALOMAL,
MLA, TO PROF. GHANSHYAM DATED 11-4-1947

Thanks for your kind letter. After the Muslim League conference the situation has deteriorated. Very nasty speeches were made. Especially speeches by Mr Kazi Isa of Quetta and Mr Unis and two other Punjabi Leaguers roused the feelings of the masses to such an extent that the audience actually wept hearing heart-rending accounts of Bihar Muslim massacres. Some of the Muslim speakers told the audience to keep 'heavy and iron-rimmed lathis' if they could not get guns and revolvers. All the Congress leaders, specially Nationalist Muslims, were abused right and left.

Then they held two meetings of prominent Muslim sardars and zamindars in camera where it is learnt they were asked to follow orders of the Muslim League faithfully in future etc.

I certainly feel that these series of conferences that are being held in Sind are not with good intentions. I have taken full notes of these speeches covering about 80 pages. Fortunately the Deputy Commissioner, Mr Keith, is a good administrator. I met him yesterday and he is fully aware of all these poisonous speeches. Possibly he has informed the Government of all these speeches and their reaction. The police officials were made to sell the tickets of the Muslim League conference. Deputy Superintendent of Police and other police officials were given prominent place on the stage reserved for distinguished visitors. All the bad characters have been enlisted as Muslim National Guards, who are using very filthy language in the presence of Hindus, actually abusing them. Hindus are feeling very panicky and suffering all these humiliations with patience. Some of the rich Hindu families have left Jacobabad for Rajputana States for the time being. Two days back nine prominent Hindus including myself and Mr Mathuradas received threatening letters. I enclose actual one such letter for your perusal.

Mr Satramdas, Hindustan correspondent, has sent a fairly detailed account of the speeches to Hindustan but it was drastically censored. I have given an English translation of these speeches to the Deputy Commissioner. Even Pir Illahi Bux did not refrain himself from being carried over by communal madness. He said, 'Sind Muslims are ready to wage fourth War of Panipat to prove their fitness and readiness to get Pakistan. I am proud Jacobabad district which is the frontier and full of brave people will be in the forefront in that jihad.'

It is not improbable that arms are being imported from the Punjab and Baluchistan borders because all zamindars of this district own lands and relatives in those areas and are politically important citizens of Kalat Estate as well as Dera Ismail Khan (Punjab) areas. Even the DSP had called me asking me to be on guard as he felt my life was in danger. I assure you that I am not afraid of these threats and I have been to Kandkot from the 5th to 8th instant and arranged for the lodging and boarding of Congress Seva Dal volunteers. Keeping in view the unhealthy atmosphere, I am thinking of cutting short the period of camp. I am writing a fairly detailed account of the present situation in the district for Hindustan and other English daily papers.

I feel you [should] come for two days here to know everything personally and at the same time attend the Congress Seva Dal camp at Kandkot.

PS.

I have just received information that a young Hindu Punjabi goldsmith has been butchered at Kandkot and his mutilated body [was] found in a Muslim graveyard yesterday. I am awaiting further details.

4. Action Taken against League Leaders

Letter from Louis Mountbatten to Vallabhbhai Patel, 7 May 1947
SPC, Vol. V, pp. 311–12.

Viceroy's Camp
Simla

Dear Sardar Patel,

As I wrote to you on 27 April, I asked the Governor of Sind whether he had any information about the objectionable speeches made by Pir Illahi Bux.

2. The Governor tells me that the Pir is not a very notable speaker, but that he does at times make rash and thoughtless speeches. After the Jacobabad conference, at which a number of objectionable speeches were made, the Governor took the matter up with the Premier and impressed on all his Ministers the necessity for exercising restraint and caution in their public speeches. As a result, the Premier, accompanied by Pir Illahi Bux and Pirzada Abdus Sattar, has recently left on a tour of Hyderabad district to impress on everybody the need to preserve the peace and to avoid anything which would lead to Hindu–Muslim conflict.

3. A certain number of speeches at this conference were made not by Sindhi speakers but by others from outside the province. The Governor also took up this matter with the Premier who took strong action, particularly in regard to a refugee from Bihar, Maulvi Abdul Qudus who had made a very objectionable speech.

He asked him to issue a statement denouncing what he was reported to have said and in case you have not seen it I attach a copy from the Sind Observer of Sunday, 27 April.

4. I had, as you know, impressed on the Governor when he was in Delhi the absolute need for maintaining peace and avoiding oppression of minorities. I am therefore particularly glad to draw your attention to the fact that the Governor handled the matter immediately in this way, some time before the receipt of my letter to him.

Yours sincerely,
Mountbatten of Burma

ENCLOSURE

Maulana Qudus has issued the following statement to the Press:

I was thunderstruck and shocked to see some articles in the newspapers of Sind, apprehending breach of the peace in Sind and accusing some responsible Muslim leaders here. Such an irresponsible step is liable to make the atmosphere explosive. Therefore, I consider it my bounden duty to warn the Muslim public of Sind against such baseless propaganda; and I repeat again what I have already declared and stressed in my public speeches delivered throughout the province, that the 'revenge of inhuman atrocity in one place or province on the innocent people of another place or province is un-Islamic, a great sin, crime and also rebellion against the holy teachings of the Quran.'

I appeal to the Muslims of Sind to remain peaceful and to regard the recent Islamic appeal by Quaid-i-Azam to preserve peace, tranquillity and good name of the only peaceful province of Sind. I also appeal to the Hindu public and Press of Sind to be wise enough and feel their human duty to welcome and sympathize with the Bihar refugees instead of putting blame on the homeless and helpless people of Bihar who did not come here for mere change in the high and hilly places of Sind.

5. Communal Speeches Made at Sukkur Muslim League Conference

Letter from Parasram V. Tahilramani to Chief Secretary, Government of Sind, 10 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 57/20/47, NAI.

Dear Sir,

I am sending you herewith a translation of some passages occurring in a letter which was written in Sindhi by Agha Badruddin MLA (Deputy-Speaker) in his Capacity as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Sukkur District Muslim League Conference, and which was read out at the opening session of that Conference at Sukkur on the 6th ultimo. The letter has been published in the issue, dated the 9th April 1947, of the Local Sindhi Daily, the *Al-Wahid*, at page 6 of that issue, in three column streaming headlines under the caption 'Get ready to face the impending delicate situation.' The passages are a direct incitement to Muslim masses to resort to violence for the purpose, among other things, avenging Bihar Muslims. Apart from those passages, the whole tenor and sprit of the letter are highly inflammatory and are calculated to cause a breach of peace in the province.

I have no doubt you will agree that such propaganda must forthwith be checked. I shall be grateful if you will kindly give this matter your immediate attention and let me know at an early date the action that you propose to take in regard there to.

Yours faithfully,
Parasram V. Tahilramani MLA
Hon Secretary,
Sind Assembly Congress Party

ENCLOSURE

In the course of a letter addressed to the Sukkur District Muslim League Conference in his capacity as chairman of the Reception Committee of that Conference, Agha Badruddin Ahmed, MLA, Deputy Speaker of the Sind Legislative Assembly writes, inter alia, as follows:

Friends, today the gaze of the world in general, and of the Muslims in the Muslim Minority Provinces in particular, is directed towards you to see whether or not your hands are going to move. They are looking out for a movement of your Muslim brethren in Muslim minority Provinces that in one hand you should have the Holy Quran as the light on your path and have in other hand a sword. Those Muslims are anxiously and restlessly straining their ears to hear the sound of hoofs of galloping horses, the rattling of the swords and the sky-rending slogans of 'Allah-Ho-Akbar' of the Muslim crusaders. Those Muslims brethren also fervently cherish this desire that 'Oh Sindhi Muslim, go forth to the land of Bihar and behold for your self how on that soil lie scattered without coffin or grave thousands of corpses of orphaned children, widowed women and innocent Muslim crusaders.'

And you are not unaware of what is happening in our own Province.

In the house of every foreigner (meaning the non-Muslim Sindhi) there are weapons. Those weapons are either guns of ammunition and bombs, but alas as for you, you have not with you even an ordinary stick.

If even now this my fervent appeal fails to stimulate some activity in your muscles, then take it from me that the days of our national existence in Hindustan are numbered. But, no, the Muslim nation is not despairing of you.

And it is not sufficient that each Muslim youth should only attach to his dress a paper or a cloth badge of a Muslim National Guard and stand in line as a guard, but it is necessary that having tied round his head a coffin cloth, he should stand forth ready to protect his religion, faith, honour name and fame.

6. Role of Congressmen in Local Politics of Sind

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Jethmal Parsram, 12 May 1947
SPC, Vol. V, p. 314.

Dear friend,

I have received your letter of the 6th instant and its enclosure entitled 'Sind betrayed.'

According to you, the Sarva Sind Hindu Panchayat organization already exists. May I know what has prevented it from functioning and ousting the Congress from the field? You seem to have written this note in anger, and when a man is in anger, he loses sense and reason. Why do you blame the Congress for doing what it considers to be proper? It is no use your saying 'Sind betrayed.' Nobody can betray Sind except the Sindhis themselves, and I do not think that Sind Congressmen who have made so many sacrifices have done so in order to betray their own province.

You say that hitherto you 'have been sitting dumb like a fool,' but evidently you are now talking like a fool. So you had better remain silent, as you used to. Instead of losing your temper and getting angry against Congressmen, you had better start doing what you think to be proper.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

7. Hindu Minority in Sind

Letter from R.K. Sidhwa to Vallabhbhai Patel, 15 May 1947
SPC, Vol. V, pp. 316–17.

Victoria Road, Karachi

My dear Sardar Sahib,

On my return from Delhi last week I was flooded with questions from various Hindu leaders and friends whether Bapu and yourself advised Dr Choithram that all Hindus should migrate from Sind at once as there was no other alternative. I told them that I had not consulted either Bapu or yourself on this matter but knowing the views of both of your goodselves and having come in close contact with both of you I without contradiction state that Bapu could not have said so. I was therefore very pleased to read your message as well as of Bapu's that we ought to be brave and face the situation and if we cannot do it non-violently to face it violently but never to be coward or 'run away.' Moreover Bapu has sent a message through Bhai Partap that if Hindus have as a last resort to migrate they should all go together by giving notice to Government and also not to forget other non-Hindus, namely, Parsis and Christians. All these have gladdened the hearts of all of us. I may here inform you that except few Amils, I mean about three to four hundred big families, nobody wants to migrate. Staunch Hindus also are

opposed to it and they have welcomed your message. I may here inform you that Parsis and Christians have great stakes in Karachi. Parsis pay the largest amount of taxes to the Municipal Corporation, so [do] Indian Christians to a good extent.

With kind regards and thanking you again for giving right and good advice to Hindus,

Yours sincerely,
R.K. Sidhwa

PS.

I may here inform you that in the meeting Dr Choithram had called for this purpose nearly three times, he had invited only selected Hindus and other Congressmen were left out.

8. Right of Gurkhas to Carry Khukries

Extract from a Letter from Nihchaldas C. Vazirani to Vallabhbhai Patel, 15 May 1947
SPC, Vol. V, p. 334.

Sheikha Building
Mahatma Gandhi Road
Karachi

Dear Sardar Sahib,

2. There is one matter which is urgent as far as Sind is concerned. You know that Gurkhas wear 'khukries' (small daggers or big knives) as ceremoniously and religiously as Sikhs wear kirpans. No action has been taken anywhere in India under the Arms Act against any Gurkha for carrying a khukri. But recently Sind police [have] seized two khukries from two Gurkhas. This has caused resentment amongst Gurkhas. It appears that the only way is the issue of a notification by the Governor-General under Section 27 of the Indian Arms Act exempting khukries on the same lines as kirpans.

With respects,

I am
Yours sincerely,
Nihchaldas C. Vazirani

9. Public Speeches by League Leaders Questioned

Note by R.N. Banerjee, 19 May 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 57/20/47, NAI.

This is with reference to H.M.'s order that the public utterances of the Ministers and other Muslim League Leaders of Sind should be watched and scrutinised.

2. Apart from too much saber-rattling, the substance of Pirzada Abdus Sattar's speeches appears to be that the Ministry's anti-Hindu measures are designed primarily for redeeming of the Muslim majority of the people from economic exploitation by Hindu capitalists. It may be argued that similar (anti-capitalist) propaganda has been in evidence even in Hindu Provinces, for example, various enactments—initiated since the economic depression following 1929—against money lending, pending legislation in Hindu majority provinces for expropriation of zamindars and landlords etc. Even making due allowance for this fact, one cannot avoid

the impression that the palpably aggressive and minatory utterances addressed to the Hindu population of the Provinces are obviously designed for terrorizing the Hindus into submission and warning them against active efforts to safeguard their legitimate interests. Such utterances must obviously be judged in the general context of the anti-Hindu campaign of the Ministry and the League leaders. HM would recall that these terror tactics are being continued in spite of Mr Jinnah's warning (some months ago) to the Sind League leaders to give a more fair deal to, and put at ease, the minorities in Sind.

R.N. Banerjee
Secretary

10. Khukris Not of Religious Significance

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Nihchaldas C. Vazirani, 21 May 1947
SPC, Vol. V, pp. 318–19.

Camp Mussoorie

My dear Nihchaldas,

I have received your letter of the 15th instant.

You have compared the Gurkhas' right to keep khukris with the Sikhs' right to wear kirpans. Perhaps there is considerable difference. One has a religious significance; the other is perhaps a right based on custom to a warlike race which has no religious significance at all. I agree the sentiment in both cases may be similar and equally strong. The Arms Act provides exemption for the Sikhs since many years. It is difficult at this stage to provide for any exemption for any particular class in the Indian Arms Act. But your suggestion will be carefully considered. You know the hostility of the Muslim League towards the Gurkhas in general.

I am delighted to have your reassuring message about the position of Hindus in Sind. I am glad to hear that the University Act is being suitably amended.

I am afraid many people suffering from a defeatist mentality have been creating a demoralizing atmosphere in Sind, but I fully appreciate your attitude which deserves to be adopted by all the public workers of the minority community in Sind. Self-confidence, courage and unity can only save the minorities in provinces where they will have to put up a hard fight to secure their existence and fair play. I wish you success in your endeavour.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

11. Hindu Minorities Must Not Migrate

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to R.K. Sidhwa, 23 May 1947
SPC, Vol. V, p. 333.

Camp Birla House
Mussoorie

My dear Sidhwa,

I have received your letter of the 15th instant. I am surprised to hear that Dr Choithram informed the Hindus in Sind that I had advised them through him to migrate from the province. I can

never be guilty of such a cowardly advice. Sind Hindus are not a small minority, nor are they without any resources. They will have full support from the rest of India in case of persecution or in case of real need. I do not see how Dr Choithram could have given such advice in my name. I am sure the non-Hindus, and particularly the Parsis, will give a good account of themselves as an intelligent and resourceful minority to do everything possible to secure their just and legitimate safeguards. They will also not hesitate in contributing their mite in the advancement of the province in which they live. The present communal atmosphere is a passing phase and is bound to end with the solution of the political deadlock. I regret to find that Dr Choithram did not invite Congressmen in the meeting referred to by you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

12. Demand for Separation of Hindu Majority Districts in Sind

Telegram from V.D. Savarkar to President, Sind Provincial Sabha, and the Chairman of Hindu and Minority Conference, 1 June 1947

S.S. Savarkar and G.M. Joshi (Eds), *Historic Statements: V.D. Savarkar*, p. 198.

PRESS ON WITH ALL POSSIBLE SPEED AND EFFICIENCY THE DEMAND FOR SEPARATION OF HINDU MAJORITY DISTRICTS IN SIND WITH A VIEW TO JOINING THE HINDUSTHAN UNION. PAKISTAN OR NO PAKISTAN HINDU MAJORITY DISTRICTS MUST BE SEPARATED EVEN IN THE INTEREST OF AKHAND HINDUSTHAN ITSELF.

I. UNITED PROVINCES

1. Report from UP

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on UP for Second Half of March 1947, 8 April 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.

...3. Communal.—The tension increased as the news of the Punjab disturbances began coming in. Incidents leading to minor rioting are reported mainly from urban areas in about 10 districts. In the western districts, the slightest incident between persons of opposite communities is liable to deteriorate into rioting. Particular mention may be made of Benares and Cawnpore. In Benares, the clash at the time of Holi mentioned in the previous report was followed a few days later by further trouble during the progress of an Arya Samaj procession and the police were obliged to open fire. Other parts of the city were soon affected and a number of stabbing incidents occurred. In Cawnpore, tension was aggravated by the celebration of the Pakistan Day on March 23 followed on March 30 by the Punjab Day. Incidents started on the night of March 29 as a result of the display of the pro and anti-Pakistan placards. Brickbatting between rival parties and panicky firing of gun shots by private persons from house tops were frequent. The District Magistrate and the Additional District Magistrate received slight injuries from brickbats. Prompt and vigorous patrolling by large parties of police and military forces, rounding up of bad characters and the imposition of collective fines prevented the situation from serious deterioration. Some cases of arson occurred. The police had to open fire to disperse crowds. The casualties were not heavy. Only two deaths have so far been reported...

2. Report from UP

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on UP for First Half of April 1947, 23 April 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.

...3. Communal.—Communal relations which had worsened as a result of the Punjab disturbances coupled with the observance, in the last fortnight of various ‘days’ and the incidents connected therewith, show little change towards improvement. The District Magistrate, Meerut, reports that the air is thick with rumours of preparations by both the major communities for a fight and one Commissioner describes the feelings between the two communities as having ‘crystallized into a state of latent animosity’. Though due to the strong and vigilant attitude of the administration the Province was free from major clashes, there is an under-current or uneasiness particularly in the Meerut Division. In Cawnpore, minor incidents like stray brick batting, putting of flesh in mosques and temples, continue and the civil authorities are constantly on riot duty. In Benares, panicky rumours have prevented the situation from returning to normal and stray incidents continue to occur. In Khurja (Bulandshahr) trouble started with school boys and culminated in the death of 15 persons and injuries to 45. In Mathura, the orthodox Hindus are said to be working up the anti-cow-slaughter agitation and the Muslims are preparing to oppose it....

3. Communal Situation Worsening in UP

Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and G.B. Pant, 3 May 1947
TOP, Vol. X, pp. 590–1.

I congratulated him on having a quiet province, and said that the Governor had told me how pleased he was with the way the Ministry was working with him, which Pandit Pant entirely confirmed.

Nevertheless, he told me that the repercussions of events in the Punjab and Bihar and Bengal were beginning to make themselves felt in the UP, and that he could not regard the situation as entirely satisfactory. They had gone out of their way in the UP to give the minorities more than a fair deal, but the Hindus were gradually becoming opposed to such generous treatment towards a community which was proving itself to be so brutal and violent in other provinces.

He asked me whether I favoured partition, and I told him emphatically ‘No’. He appealed to me then not to agree to a decision for partition. I pointed out that I could not go against the will of the people; the most I could do was to leave the choice as far as possible to the people of India, and this was the policy I was endeavouring to follow.

He regretted the fact that we were leaving in June 1948, at such short notice, and said that if two or three years ago we could have announced a date five years ahead for our departure everything could have been done in a much more orderly and smooth way and with less risk of violence on our departure.

He volunteered the statement that the feeling between the British and Indians had never been so good, and said that this feeling had noticeably improved in the last couple of months. He felt that this was one of the few good things that had come out of the announcement. He also paid the usual flattering tribute to me, saying that I was the right man to settle the problem. I replied that I could now see how he had become the Chief Minister of the UP.

4. Peace Committees on Either Side Must Act Responsibly

G.B. Pant's Address to Members of Peace Committees at Bareilly, 6 May 1947

B.R. Nanda (Ed.), *Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant*, Vol. XI, pp. 135–6.

'We should always recognize the high value of human life. Difference of opinion between human beings is natural and it is very necessary for human progress, but the difference of opinion should not make people give up behaviour expected of decent men', said Pandit Pant. Outlining the policy of his Government, he said: 'We have had enough of these communal orgies of bloodshed and no good Government can tolerate such acts of violence on innocent people. The Government will not spare any pains to root out these riots in the province and they will be curbed. Maximum strictness will be shown to prevent this pest. Curfew, punitive police, collective fines, shadowing of mischief-mongers, in a nutshell whatever is humanly possible to stamp out communal rioting, will be undertaken by the Government.'

'It is high time public opinion should mobilize itself against riot mongers. It is wrong to treat them as heroes. They are not men but worse than beasts. By causing such incidents they paralyse the entire normal life of the city leading to the imposition of curfew on account of which thousands are forced to starve and are not able to get even the bare necessities of life. Such a state of affairs will never be allowed to continue.'

Referring to the Gandhi—Jinnah appeal he said: 'They have urged upon their followers that political questions cannot be settled by these orgies of bloodshed and destruction. Hence if we are their true followers we should abstain from such acts of violence and make sincere efforts to make people realize the truth of what they say.'

Referring to the complaints against officials, he said: 'The public should realize the responsibilities of Government servants and render them every help they stand in need of. If they have any genuine complaint against any official, a complaint should be made to the official himself and I am confident that the official himself will rectify.'

Outlining the work for the peace committees, Pandit Pant said: 'The chief item of programme in a peace committee's activities should be propaganda. It should foster a mentality that if an incident has occurred people should not be vindictive, rather they should wait for the law to take its due course. It should impress that such acts of retaliation lead to further retaliation, forming a vicious circle with definite loss to both communities and absolutely no advantage to them. Peace committees should try to remove ill-will nursed by one community against the other. The Government by maximum strictness can only prevent lawlessness but cannot foster fellow and neighbourly feelings between the two communities. Peace committees should bring about a complete change of heart and tell people that those who indulge in these acts of lawlessness are responsible for the imposition of curfew and starvation of thousands of people confined to their homes, and that such people are not entitled to any sympathy, much less praise. They should not receive any encouragement whatsoever and should be looked down upon. Peace committees can render great help in the investigation of cases. People in communal frenzy try to implicate innocent people of the other community. A peace committee, if it honestly works, can advise the Government about the innocence of people and the Government will see that innocent people are not harassed, but they should not give any quarter to culprits who must at all cost be brought to book. A peace committee should remove heartburns in the two communities and make public opinion flow in constructive channels instead of recriminatory and destructive courses. Peace committees should be formed in every *mohalla* in the city. The Government will place certain funds at the disposal of the District Magistrate to help the peace

committees in their propaganda drive. There is the need of a practical programme to improve the atmosphere.'

5. Organization of Home Guards and Assistance to Refugees

Extracts from a Letter from G.B. Pant to Vallabhbhai Patel, 28 May 1947

B.R. Nanda (Ed.), *Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant*, Vol. XI, pp. 147-9.

Naini Tal

My dear Sardar Sahib,

....I had occasion to speak to you about our proposal for the organization of home-guards. We have been greatly handicapped because of the apathetic attitude of the Defence Department. They seem to have been under a misapprehension about the exact scope and character of the proposed home-guards. These home-guards, as you will see from the accompanying copy of the Home-Guards Act, will be no more and no better than an auxiliary of the police force. They will not be entitled to keep any arms themselves. All their arms will be kept in the armoury. Only they will be given training in the use of fire-arms so that in emergencies they may keep watch and ward over the areas assigned to them. We would be content to have 410 muskets even if 303 rifles are not available. The Defence Department had agreed to lend us some barracks for this purpose, but even such permission was withdrawn. Consequently in spite of all our efforts the scheme has not made any progress so far. I shall feel grateful if you will kindly secure us the muskets and the barracks that we need. Our Home Secretary who was at Delhi recently spoke to Mr Dundas in this connection and he gathered from the talk that he had with him that the prejudices were greatly due to misunderstanding and misconception about the exact status of the home-guards. They seem to have been misled by the sort of home-guards they had in England when the War was in progress. It was, more or less, a military force. Such is not, however, our intention...

We are doing all we can to help the refugees in Hardwar. I am asking the Transport Department to accommodate wherever possible such of them as had been engaged in motor business in the Punjab and North-West Frontier and held licences for plying motor-vehicles in their homelands. The influx of the refugees is, I understand, progressively increasing. Many new problems seem to be arising from day to day and some of them are also causing, I am told, a little embarrassment. However, I hope all questions will be satisfactorily settled. It is necessary, however, to make use of Raniganj camp near Hardwar and Clement barracks in Dehra Dun for the refugees. It will not be possible to accommodate them in the existing buildings and they are said to be already overcrowded. Will you kindly ask Shankar to see that formal sanction is issued to enable the refugees to occupy these barracks?

I have received your latest letter and made necessary enquiries. I am assured that there is no cause for any grave concern. However, I have asked those concerned to be vigilant and watchful.

I think I have already written at considerable length, so I need not take more of your time.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
G.B. Pant

6. 'Proportion of Hindus and Muslims in Services'

Extract from G.B. Pant's Speech in UP Legislative Council, 29 May 1947

B.R. Nanda (Ed.), *Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant*, Vol. XI, pp. 149–54.

I have listened to the speeches that have been delivered with due attention.... Although I would have preferred the postponement of a debate of this character to more tranquil times, I cannot get over the exigencies of the present situation. It was perhaps inevitable. It has become a most pressing and inexorable demand. In the circumstances we have to apply ourselves to this question. Luckily, the honourable mover has himself not suggested any basis on which the proportion should be fixed. His resolution gives ample latitude to Government. It only says, the Council recommends to the Government that immediate orders be issued fixing the proportion in which the members of the various communities in the province will be recruited in the public services. What that proportion should be he does not care to indicate. On what basis that proportion should be fixed he is willing to leave it to Government. Well, to that extent I appreciate his attitude. I also think that his resolution does not mean that recruitment by promotion is to be made on any other basis than that of merit. I think he concedes and accepts the principle that so far as the filling up of vacancies by promotion is concerned there should be no other criterion except that of merit, for the introduction of any other extraneous consideration would lead to a lamentable deterioration in the efficiency of public services....

First of all a public servant is meant for the service of the public. He has to forget his caste, his creed and his colour. He must serve all impartially, justly, fairly, without fear and without favour.... Loyalty and devotion to the State which maintains public services is the fundamental condition of every public service, and especially on an occasion like this when we are faced with new problems and when things are going to take shape not only for the present but also for decades or perhaps for centuries. It is necessary to remember that whatever be the state of the State that may emerge out of the deliberations that have been going on in this country and abroad for some time, every member of the public services, wherever he be situated, will above all have to be devoted to the State and his allegiance to the State will have to be unqualified, unreserved and unstinted....

The next point that remains relates to recruitment, as it is ordinarily called by the method of direct recruitment. When we come to that, I admit that situated as we are we cannot perhaps altogether ignore the hard realities of the present situation. But still it is to be recognized that in an ideal system, and we have to approach the ideal, there can be only one method of recruitment, that is recruitment by fitness and efficiency. I do not know what the final decision will be, but I would personally think that so far as posts are filled, either by the Public Service Commission or by boards of selection on a competitive basis, competition alone should determine the eligibility of candidates for vacancies. That will enable us to get the best men....

It is unthinkable that any scheme should be put forward under which premium is sought to be placed on inefficiency to such an extent as would ensure for any section of the community a larger number of posts than it could secure on the basis of competition or its population. Obviously, those who are unqualified or do not come up to the prescribed standard or are not the best ones should not be given a larger proportion than they should be entitled to on the basis of population. Democracy does recognize numbers and it is based—whether one likes it or not—on the principle of all heads being almost equal, and so population does afford a reasonable test for determining the strength of communities as well as groups. And, after all, on what does a minority or a majority base its claim, except on its numbers? So if numbers

alone is the criterion, then we cannot ignore that criterion when we come to the recruitment of services. I personally would like all those posts which are filled by means of competition to be recruited on the sole ground of merit and nothing else. No extraneous considerations should come in and those who are the best should be given the privilege and the duty of discharging the heavy responsibilities attached to responsible offices. But, as I said, if there be a keenness in any quarter that population basis would suit better, then that might be considered. There you have a yardstick and by that yardstick you can measure and see through impartial agencies who are the best men in each group.

There is another category of public servants: those who are recruited not by means of competition, but more or less arbitrarily. There one can very well have the apprehension that justice will not be done to any particular community, and there being no tangible test for determining who is unfit and all being apparently fit, I think the population basis may have to be accepted for posts of that character. It will leave no ground for apprehension for any minorities; otherwise as things are developing there may be an apprehension that even with regard to such posts the minorities may not have a fair deal later. But here it is not only a question of minorities but also of the majority. There are unfortunately strong feelings on all sides that all are not getting a just and fair deal. Mere arguments do not convince people and something tangible has to be done in order to reassure men's minds and one must adopt a course which must be just and fair and which, while being equitable in every way, also goes to reassure the public mind. So, as far as the posts that are recruited otherwise than by competition are concerned, the population basis may perhaps be a fair basis for determining the eligibility of individuals for such posts....

I hope it will also be recognized that new forces are emerging everyday. Up to this moment the claims for recruitment had been more or less restricted to superior and richer classes among the Hindus as well as among the Muslims. But now it is not only a question of the richer section of the Hindus or of the richer section of the Muslims. I see no reason why the scheduled classes should not have their full and legitimate share. I personally think that the maximum effort should be made to ensure for them the maximum number for which qualified candidates can be found among them. This is the debt that we all, whether Hindus or Muslims, owe to them. So, if reservation has to be made it must be made first of all for them, because they are weak, they are poor, they are suppressed and unless they come up to the level, we will have a very feeble link in our political and social chain which may impair the soundness of the entire fabric. So they are entitled to consideration.

Then there are the backward sections among Hindus and Muslims who do not come within the category of scheduled castes or any other, but who also feel that they are entitled to a share in public services. I do not exactly know how their aspirations can be satisfied but I appreciate their ambitions and desires and I think that if any feasible scheme can be devised we will have also to take into account their claims and what is due to them. How that can be done I do not know. I have no clear idea.

I hope in view of the statement that I have made the honourable mover will not consider it necessary to press his resolution. I can assure honourable members of this House that we have only one desire and that is this that every public servant in the province should serve the public honestly, enthusiastically, scrupulously and devotedly, that every man and woman may aspire to achieve the highest position that may be open to anyone else in this land, and that nobody may be debarred from any office, place or position that is valued or respected, whether by communities or by individuals.

Chapter 19. Muslim League Civil Disobedience Movements in Assam and NWFP

A. ASSAM

1. '11 Muslim Immigrants Killed in Assam Firing: Civil Disobedience Movement Takes a Serious Turn'

25 March 1947

Extract from a Report from *Pakistan Times* as cited in *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 454-5.

BARPETA (ASSAM), March 24: Four people, including a woman of 70, died on the spot, and an equal number were wounded, when the police opened fire on the Muslims of Chochra, a village in Barpeta sub-division on March 21, informs the Secretary of the Assam Provincial Muslim League.

The same evening fire was opened again in the Mandia grazing reserve, killing and wounding a number of Muslims. Up to the morning of March 23, 11 bodies were removed to hospital and 15 persons were lying seriously wounded.

The situation has taken a grave turn. Maulvi Syed Abdur Rauf, MLA, rushed to the spot and then returned to Barpeta for attending the 'Pakistan Day' celebrations. He said that the police had absolutely no justification in opening fire on the peaceful Muslims, but unless an inquiry was made by top-ranking officers and due care was taken by the League leaders, justice would be denied to the Muslims.

A message from Gauhati says that the situation in several places in Kamrup, Goalpara and Darrang Districts is tense, following the launching of agitation against the eviction policy of the Assam Government by the Muslim League, but the Government are taking precautionary measures in these areas. It was stated there officially on Saturday....

The Assam Muslims observed complete *hartal* yesterday as a protest against the arrest of their leaders.

In Tezpur a huge procession was taken out and when it reached the jail, the police tried to stop it but failed.

Meetings were held in many towns and villages demanding the release of the leaders and condemning the eviction policy of the Assam Government.—OPI.



2. Religious Distribution of Population and Grouping in Assam

Extract from a Letter from V.P. Menon to G.E.B. Abell, 29 March 1947

IOR, R/3/1/130, Acc. No. 3448, NAI.

SECRET

SECRETARIAT OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL (REFORMS)

NEW DELHI

My dear Abell,

Please refer to your Secret D.O. letter No. 592/58 of yesterday's date regarding the importance to the Congress of the Sikhs and Assam....

The position in Assam is that, apart from Sylhet districts, it is predominantly a Hindu province. In the province as a whole, out of a total population of 10.2 millions, Hindus number 4.21 millions and Muslims 3.44 millions. If we exclude Sylhet district, the figures are—total population of 7.10 millions, Hindus 3.06 millions, Muslims 1.55 millions, Tribes 2.41 millions. Congress naturally cannot be expected willingly to surrender a Hindu majority province to Group 'C'.

The position has inevitably been very much affected by the recent communal disturbances in the country, and in present circumstances the Congress cannot be expected to advise Assam and the Sikhs in the Punjab to accept grouping unreservedly; and in fact, even if they did, the minorities and the Hindus in Assam will certainly not yield to Congress pressure.

Yours sincerely,

V.P. MENON

3. 'Assam Govt. Can't Submit to Threats: *Bordoloi Exposes League Plans for "Invasion"*'

The Tribune, 1 April 1947.

Shillong, March 31.—'The Assam Government cannot submit to any kind of threat, whether from inside or outside the province', said Mr Gopinath Bardoloi on his return from a tour of the disturbed areas in Assam.

The Premier said: 'The decision of the joint Council of Action of the Bengal and Assam Provincial Muslim League to launch an invasional attack on Assam with organized Muslim League national guards must be an extremely unfortunate one. In judging by what has happened since then it has caused widespread alarm and sense of insecurity throughout the province. The Government of Assam might have treated the whole thing lightly if it did not result in the disturbances which have taken place in different parts of middle and lower Assam. The talk of adoption of civil disobedience by the Assam Muslim League has been particularly harmful as some unfortunate illiterates are being duped to violent activities by this mischievous propaganda.'

'Besides minor aggressive activities in small grazing reserves in major places aggressive tactics were adopted by immigrants against police parties kept in grazing reserves to prevent illegal encroachments and disturbances. In Govindapur reserve the police had to open fire in order to save themselves and protect their camp from the ... fury of an armed mob of several thousands. Near Mankachar the joint Council of Action of the Muslim League have opened a camp named as 'Purva Pakistan Qila' (Fort of Eastern Pakistan) where training is given to

Muslim League national guards with a view to training them in the art of creating violent disturbances within the province by participating in civil disobedience and violating all law and order of the Government.

‘The Government have full information that even now some members of the Bengal Muslim League Parliamentary Party, in conjunction with other important local Leaguers in Mankachar area, are bent upon carrying out their mischievous activities which might immediately result in widespread disturbances in the province.

‘We had certain talk with Mr Saadulla, leader of the opposition, for a quieter settlement of certain issues connected with the situation. But it must be obvious that so long as this threat of civil disobedience and apprehension of lawlessness remains, the Government shall have to pursue a policy by which these lawless activities may not be made possible and people saved from unnecessary bloodshed which is bound to result from the tactics followed by certain people.—API.

4. ‘Bardoloi Ministry Must Go’

Editorial from *Dawn*, 2 April 1947.

In sheer ruthlessness, hatred and violence the immigrant-baiting by the Bardoloi Ministry of Assam can only be compared with the brutal persecution of Jews by the Nazis under the guidance of that master Jew-baiter Julius Streicher, who has since paid for his crimes with his life in the Nuremberg gallows. In both cases the objective would appear to be the same: Streicher exterminated Jews from Germany and other German occupied areas in the hey-days of Nazi power, while Premier Bardoloi, equally power-drunk, has been waging an unholy war against peaceful Muslim immigrants in Assam with a view to their extirpation. The tragic irony of it, however, is that the engine of repression has been set in full gear against the very persons who have enriched the economic life of Assam by making waste land bloom by the sweat of their brows just as in Germany it was the hounded-out Jews who enriched the cultural heritage of that country in every sphere of human activity.

By divine dispensation Nazism has long been liquidated and its victims everywhere are heaving a sigh of relief. But in Assam the heavy sighs of people wounded by police and military bullets as well as of those forcibly dispossessed of their earthly belongings and subjected to all sorts of indignities that militate against the civilised human conscience by the Bardoloi Ministry continue to rend the air. It has been well said that those whom the gods wish to destroy, they make them mad first. Strange as it may seem symptoms of lunacy are clearly visible in the conduct and behaviour of the Assam Ministry towards the immigrants as well as League workers who have stood by them in their distress. Who could have dispersed peaceful ‘squatters’ (we quote the expression from the Home Minister Mr Basanta Kumar Das’s statement in the Assam Assembly) by military bullets other than some violent inmates of a bedlam? A few months ago when homeless Londoners voiced their grievances against the British Government by squatting at the doors of public buildings and private mansions, were they fired upon or even baton charged by the police? Incredible though it may sound the Bardoloi Ministry was guilty of the maniacal excess of dispersing peaceful squatters by bullets. To any normal man this would appear as an act of madness.

We may be allowed to send a message of hope and cheer to our oppressed brethren in Assam in their distress. We sincerely believe that the day of their deliverance from the vicious claws of

their soulless tormentors is not far to seek. The Assam Provincial League has decided to launch a province wide civil disobedience movement against the Bardoloi Ministry for the restoration of civil liberties, which have been ruthlessly suppressed by them. The Working Committee of the Provincial League has adopted the following resolution in that connection.

‘In view of the high-handed action of the Congress Government of Assam in arresting some leaders of the Muslim League including Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan, President of the Assam Provincial Muslim League and the firing on unarmed innocent Muslim immigrants outside grazing reserve, resulting in 12 deaths, including an old woman of 70 and several injured; and in view of the fact that the liberties of the Muslims of Assam are being trampled upon by the Provincial Government by suppressing free association and by putting restrictions on letters, telegrams and other means of communications, this Committee directs every branch of the Muslim League organization throughout the province immediately to start a peaceful, non-violent, non-communal mass civil disobedience movement on a wide scale to break a Government which has not only been unjust and unfair to the Muslims, but has failed in every direction in relieving the people of the province from the hardship created by scarcity, rising prices, corruption and nepotism.

‘It calls upon the people of the province as a whole to support the movement’.

The League leaders have given an assurance to the Ministry that the movement is not to be directed against any community but is solely intended to bring the Government to their knees. A similar movement was launched in the Punjab recently which ended in a glorious victory for the League. The enemies of the League today lie prostrate, vanquished and utterly demoralized. We have no doubt that the history of Northern Pakistan will repeat itself in Eastern Pakistan. Meanwhile, the Muslims of Assam must respond to the call of their leaders and jump into the arena with courage, and confidence. Victory will not take long to crown their struggle.

5. ‘Censorship of Eviction News Imposed by Bardoloi Ministry’

Dawn, 8 April 1947.

STRICT censorship of news relating to eviction and repression of immigrants in Assam has been imposed by the Bardoloi Ministry as will be evident from the withholding by the Shillong Telegraph office of an important Press telegram filed for ‘Dawn’ by its Shillong correspondent.

In a letter no. P-I/A.P. dated March 28, 1947, to our correspondent, the Telegraph Master of the Shillong Telegraph Office said: ‘I beg to inform you that your Press telegram BGXQ/XQ No. 1 dated March 20, 1947 addressed to Dawn, Delhi has been stopped as objectionable’.

The telegram in question which was sent to ‘Dawn’ by post by the correspondent reads as follows:

‘The death roll as result of police and military firings on immigrants at Barpeta on March 21 and 22 has, according to the Muslim League mounted to 25, including one woman, while the condition of 16 injured is reported grave. This ghastly tragedy has miserably failed much to the discomfiture of the Congress Government to curb the progress of the civil disobedience movement. It has assumed a dynamic force that has brought closer together all sections of the landless, devoutly wished by the Muslim League.

Report from Nowgong states about 300 Scheduled Caste immigrants evicted from their holdings in the middle of February have joined the movement in true comradeship with their oppressed Muslim brethren.

At Barpeta there is not a single Reserve Area which people have not infiltrated and constructed their houses in spite of the authorities. Success at Barpeta has raised the morale of immigrants in Mongaldai. Those who left the place reappeared and again started cultivating the land. The situation has become so much desperate for the Congress Government that Mr Gopinath Bardoloi, Premier, was obliged to send an SOS to Sardar Baldev Singh, Defence Member, Interim Government, praying for more troops to assist him in warding off what he calls a Muslim invasion, it is reliably learnt.

6. Provision of Military Aid for Assam

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Baldev Singh, 9 April 1947

SPC, Vol. V, p. 12.

New Delhi

My dear Baldev Singh,

I am sending herewith a copy of an extract from a letter which I have received from Bardoloi, the Assam Premier. It appears that the reservation which you made in regard to military aid has been misunderstood by him, and a clarification is therefore necessary. The intention clearly was that military aid should be given when civil forces are unable to cope with the situation, whether it arises out of the eviction policy of the Government of Assam or any other matter, but that it will not be given merely to evict immigrants. If you agree, clarification on these lines may be sent to the Government of Assam.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER DATED 31-3-47 FROM MR GOPINATH BARDOLOI TO SARDAR PATEL

We are really grateful to you and Sardar Baldev Singh for the promise of aid of military; but the reservation that has been put to it that it could not be applied for eviction purposes will create difficulties. Most of the troubles will arise out of the Government's policy of maintaining the inviolability of the grazing reserves which was agreed to by all parties, including the Muslim League, as also due to Government's attempt to distribute available waste lands to all including Hindus, Muslims, tribals and the immigrants themselves. If there is any flare-up it will be due to Government's policy to do the right thing to all parties concerned on an economic basis. But the Muslim League only want to settle them with Muslims only and when Government thwart it they go for civil disobedience. It is therefore not known how the maintenance of law and order of the province as a whole could be distinguished for maintenance of law and order in the grazing reserves and waste lands where law and order are proposed to be infringed. I request you to give very careful consideration to the points I have raised herein and clarify by some direction to us and to the military authorities, according to which the distinction may not be maintained.



7. Patel Approves of Bardoloi's Immigration Policy

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Gopinath Bardoloi, 11 April 1947

SPC, Vol. V, p. 13.

New Delhi

My dear Bardoloi,

I have received your two letters and have taken action on each of them.

On receiving the first letter, I got in touch with Baldev Singh and made sure that military aid would be available to you in case of need. He is satisfied that such aid would be ample.

As regards your second letter, in which you wanted an amplification of the statement that troops would not be used for eviction purposes, I have passed on the extract to Baldev Singh with the suggestion that the point may be suitably clarified to convey that military aid should be given when civil forces are unable to cope with the situation, whether it arises out of the eviction policy of the Government of Assam or any other matter, but that it will not be given merely to evict immigrants. I shall let you know the action taken on this suggestion by the Defence Member.

In the meantime, I have had a discussion with your Speaker and Shri Prabhu Dayal. They have also discussed the matter with Gandhiji. You will have our full support in your stand on legal rights. Not an inch of land should be surrendered to the illegal immigrants, and you must stand solidly and firm on the policy which you are implementing. To yield to threats, show of force or any 'direct action' would be suicidal and unbecoming of Government with any sense of responsibility.

I have explained these matters to Shri Rohini Kumar Chaudhury, and he will tell you what we feel about it.

Shri Prabhu Dayal also mentioned to me that you require some two or three good officers. I should like to have further details as to what type of officers you require, of what seniority and for which post. After getting the details, I shall let you know what we can do to help you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

8. 'Saadulla in Talks with Bardoloi'

Dawn, 11 April 1947.

GAUHATI, Thursday.—MR MOHAMMAD SAADULLA, ex-Premier of Assam and Chairman of the Assam Muslim League Council of Action, revealed at a public meeting yesterday that negotiations were still proceeding between him and Mr Gopinath Bardoloi, the Premier, for 'an honourable settlement on the eviction question' so that Assam might be spared the untoward happenings which might be inevitable otherwise.

Mr Saadulla also said that the civil disobedience movement had not yet begun, but was being examined by the League High Command. He counselled all, including League Members and overzealous officers, not to bang the negotiation door.

Referring to the eviction policy now being pursued by the Assam Government, Mr Saadulla said that it was not the one formulated in 1946 between Mr Gopinath Bardoloi, Mr Rohini Kumar Chaudhury and himself to solve the land problem in the Province.

The present Government was following an entirely new policy. The Congress in 1939 virtually accepted the abolition of 'Line System' policy which later culminated in a tripartite

agreement years ago. 'I accuse the present Government of breach of the terms of that agreement and it is indeed a travesty of truth to say that the Bardoloi Ministry have been acting by agreed policy', he said.

Mr Saadulla referred to the recent statement of Mr Gopinath Bardoloi in which the Premier had said that 3,500 families had been evicted so far, of whom 700 families were entitled to provision of land as protected people. If 27,000 bighas of land were provided to evictees, said Mr Saadulla, the problem might easily be solved and if the Congress Government agreed to this term he (Mr Saadulla) would stop further immigration into Assam in the best interest of Assam as a whole.

Dwelling on the question of including Assam in Pakistan he stated that Assam was a Muslim majority province if the tribals and Scheduled Caste people were excluded from the Hindu fold, as these people preferred to be separate communities. He also levelled the charge of nepotism, corruption and inefficiency against the present Government.

Concluding Mr Saadulla appealed to all to maintain peace and harmony as the Muslim League had no design to launch any movement against any community or individual, but wanted, if forced, to fight an unjust policy.

This was Mr Saadulla's first public speech since the Muslim League's decision to launch civil disobedience movement in Assam.—API.

9. Preparations for Direct Action against Assam Government

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten, 13 April 1947

SPC, Vol. V, pp. 18–21.

New Delhi

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

I am sending herewith a copy of an intercepted letter which I have received from Assam. This will give you an idea of the preparations which are being made to launch direct action against the Government of Assam. Any further comment on my part is unnecessary. It may be noted that the writer of this letter is a member of the Assam Legislative Assembly and a prominent member of the Muslim League.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

Purba Pakistan Killa
PO Mankachar
Dhubri (Assam)
24 March 1947

M.A. Kashem, BA (Hons), MLA
Headmaster
Mankachar H.E. School

Jonab,

At the request of the party I had to painfully leave Shillong without any final scheme and programme. On my way home I had been to Mymensingh to see if Mr Pathan was there. From

there I directly went to Calcutta and met Mr Pathan and sought their help. At his suggestion I saw the treasurer, Mr Jasimuddin Sahib and other members of the joint committee and the working committee. Moreover, I tried to contact all the members of Mymensingh and Rangpur districts for their active participation. They all are in favour of the move but it will be mainly monetary help. From the Calcutta League office I booked a trunk call but had no response from Shillong.

A publication in Ananda Bazar Patrika of 8th Chaitra has astonished me. Though the decision of the working committee was ultra vires still we have accepted and as such there is no reason for such ruinous publication. I do hope you will kindly contradict the statement to infuse courage in the people.

As I had not the opportunity of living a detailed scheme of Purba Pakistan Killa [fort], I am sending Maulvi Sarwaral Islam, a prominent League worker, to give you an idea as to the institution. Viewing the need of the community at this juncture, I, in pursuance of a resolution of the joint committee at Bahadurabad, started this killa in the name of Allah. I am at a loss to find means to continue it. Mr Ghyashuddin Pathan accompanied by Mvi [Maulvi] Nazir Hussain Khandker, BL, MLA and Mvi Paniruddin Ahmed, MLA of Kurigram, visited the killa on the 22nd after addressing a huge gathering in the locality. He of course was kindly ready to advance me some money from their fund but I declined to receive any money direct as it will lead to dangerous consequences. In Calcutta I learnt that Mvi. Mahmud Ali had already accepted two thousand rupees from the committee. I have in writing requested him to make payment only to the chairman, committee of action, or his agent. He has given after long discussion the gist of their proposal to us which is sent to you for consideration and information. Kindly either communicate direct with the secretary or send your correspondence in a closed cover per bearer so that I may manage to send via Kurigram. Their proposal seems to be quite good as far as preparation of the programme and plan is concerned. This has also done away with chances of difference between the opinion of our provincial committee of action and the joint committee.

Maulvi Nazamul Huq came here yesterday with a copy of the resolution of the committee of action and I am simply astonished to find the contradiction between paper publication and the resolution. In the paper it was announced that civil disobedience will continue, and as such I arranged meetings in each union only with the willing persons. No arrest was made nor fire opened though Sec. 144 was violated. Details you may know from the bearer. If they abstain from arresting what step should we take to court arrest? I am in a position, Allah willing, to send at least 10,000 (ten thousand) persons to court arrest from this killa. Even I can, if you desire, send batches after batches from this killa to Barpeta or Mangaldai at fixed places to occupy waste land. Of course, I cannot exactly give you the number but I think a sufficient number may be recruited if I get timely intimation.

I am very much in favour of guerilla fight specially in the Garo Hills elaka [area]—attacks may be made at different border places of Bengal. I am soon going to that side to ask them to be prepared. The other day I received one telegram from you asking me to attend the meeting of the committee of action on 1 April. Is it a fact that the meeting will actually take place? If so, how can I be present if you do not permit me to court arrest on the way as I am definitely under warrant of arrest though the Hon'ble Premier and the Home Minister gave you contrary information? I would be glad if you kindly let me know per bearer if you really want me there.

Now for opening of another base at Sonahat I would request you to take early steps. At present there being only [one] base the Government has concentrated their attention to this killa. Not only Mr Peters has been made Additional Deputy Commissioner for Mankachar [but there is also] one senior magistrate, a few inspectors and sub-inspectors with some sections of the Assam Rifles and armed police. I will take up the responsibility of opening it with Mvi. Paniruddin Sahib, MLA of Kurigram. As it has become impossible for me to manage the recurring expenses of this killa, I would request you to authorize me to draw on your behalf from the joint committee an amount to the extent of Rs 20,000 (twenty thousand) for recurring expenses and non-recurring expenses, an estimate of which is enclosed herewith as it is far easier for me to draw money from Calcutta than from Shillong. Of course you may kindly consider the question seriously and then let me know what you settle. In case you authorize me, you will kindly send an authority letter per bearer. If you are not in a position to authorize me, you will kindly personally visit the place within a week or so otherwise I shall be undone—already I had to spend five thousand from different funds.

I am fairly well. Hope this will find you in good health and spirit.

With salaams and best regard,

Sincerely yours,
Abul Kashem

10. Posting of Armed Forces in Assam

Letter from Gopinath Bardoloi to Vallabhbhai Patel, 15 April 1947
SPC, Vol. V, pp. 14–16.

Shillong

Respected Sardarji,

Your letter sent per favour of Shriyut Kumar Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri has been received by me. Since after I had written to you regarding our conversation with General Renkin, myself and my Home Minister had [another] conversation with General Stuker of Eastern Command in the presence of the Governor, the Inspector-General of Police, the military officer in charge of the Assam Regiment and also the officer in charge of the Assam Rifles. General Stuker repeated almost the same arguments as General Renkin and said that we had dissipated the provincial force, namely, the railway force and the Assam Rifles by distribution in weaker stations and thereby weakening the striking force of the army. To my great surprise, the Governor also joined with him and thought that we should withdraw the few platoons placed in the grazing reserves and concentrate them in particular places. Of course, I most emphatically opposed this idea as these forces also were putting down civil disobedience by mass encroachment in the grazing reserves with show of arms which is only a part of the general policy of the Muslim League. I also explained to him that if the policy was one of prevention of bloodshed and not one of bloodshed, the best way to avert it was by posting armed forces in such areas where disorder was apprehended; and it is only on account of that fact, namely, the maintenance of forces in dangerous areas that a flare-up in these areas has been averted. Concentration in particular areas will only mean that there will be already trouble in these areas such as had happened at Noakhali. Whatever might be from the military point of view, I said that I could not agree to remove them (excepting from one place) from these areas and that the army, if they wanted

to give us any help, must give additional forces for the defence of the borders in 4 or 5 places which I have named. After a controversy ranging for more than an hour the General agreed to render whatever help was possible to be given to us. I wanted the Governor by an order in writing to place our specific demands for a brigade; but neither did the Governor do so in our presence nor did the General agree that such a strength could be immediately made available. As far as I know, it is the Governor who is to requisition, but if the Governor would not act according to the advice of the Ministry, what can we do?

The friends who saw you report that you were considering us to be weak. I boldly say that we have been more than strong considering the forces at our disposal; but if the Government of India cannot have their orders enforced with regard to the requirements of the province, blame should not come to the provincial Government. In the meantime, however, some forces have been given to take route marching in these border areas of Dhubri and they are also placing some platoons (eight) in two other areas in Shillong and Pandu; but it is the military and the Governor who will be the persons in charge of the disposition of the army.

Regarding land policy, we are standing very firm. Maulvi Mohammed Saadulla has expressed to some people that if we show our attitude to discuss with the Muslim League and are prepared to give some land to some whom we were not bound to give according to the terms of the agreement with him, he would advise calling off of the civil disobedience. I have, however, caused it to be known to him that there can be no question of granting any more land beyond what we are bound to give under the agreement, and that so long as civil disobedience remains we cannot actually negotiate with the Muslim League on any issue. We have caused it to be known through the Press that if they withdraw their civil disobedience we might discuss issues for implementing the terms of agreement about which also the charge of the Muslim League is that we have not done so. I hope you will kindly continue to take interest in our affairs in all details. I shall continue to furnish you with information from time to time.

As regards posting of officers, I shall write to you a separate note officially.

Yours sincerely,
Gopinath Bardoloi

PS. I should have told you that Sardar Baldev Singh wanted us to use the whole Assam Rifles and wanted to replace the same by other troops to guard the frontier. But the Governor, and possibly the General, [are] opposed to the idea.

G.N. Bardoloi

11. 'Muslim Students behind Assam Campaign'

Dawn, 16 April 1947.

SYLHET, Tuesday.—MR MOINUL HAQUE CHAUDHRY, General Secretary All-India Muslim Students Federation Chamber, Committee of Action, Assam Provincial Muslim League has issued the following statement:

'My attention has been drawn to a statement issued by one Mr Abdul Haque alleged to be the Secretary of Assam Muslim Students Federation asking the Muslim students 'not to participate in anti-Assamese activities of Assam Muslim League which is an institution guided by non-Assamese and also the civil disobedience movement of Muslim League.

'The General Secretary of the All-India Muslim Students Federation declares that the Secretary of Assam Students Federation is not Abdul Haque but Mr Hoshmat Ali. The aforesaid gentleman is one of those misguided Communist influenced agent-provocateurs who was expelled by the Assam Muslim Students' Federation with Tosodduq Ahmed and others for his move to start a parallel Muslim Students' Federation with himself as Secretary and Akram of Jorhat as President.

'For sometime he has been issuing statements posing as Secretary of the Federation to mislead people. I am glad that one of the ex-Presidents of the Federation has contradicted the news. I want to inform public that the whole Muslim students' force of Assam is behind the Muslim League movement and they are prepared to face all eventualities'.

12. Political Situation in Assam

Letter from Syed M. Saadullah to M.A. Jinnah, 16 April 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 555–8.

SHILLONG, ASSAM

My dear Quaid-i-Azam,

Mr Abdul Matin Chaudhury who is going to attend the meeting of the Central Committee of Action at Delhi on the 20th April, has requested me to send you a short note on the present political situation of Assam.

The position is hopeless from any point of view. On the 19th February, a meeting of the Council of the Provincial Muslim League was convened in a sub-divisional headquarters of the Sylhet district where a Committee of Action was created who were authorized to devise ways and means to counteract the eviction policy of the Congress Government. I was nominated a member in my absence without my consent. It is alleged that the President of the Provincial Muslim League verbally told the members on the 19th February that the meeting of the Committee of Action will be held at Dhubri on 2nd March. That is probably the reason why no notice was sent to me of this meeting on the 2nd of March though I was not present at Maulvibazar where the Council meeting was held.

Only three out of nine members of the Committee of Action were present at Dhubri where the Committee of Action is supposed to have clothed [*sic*] the President of the Provincial Muslim League with dictatorial powers. One member of the Committee of Action—an MLA—who was present at Dhubri on the day, asserts that there was no meeting of the Committee of Action at Dhubri. The President convened a meeting of the Working Committee of the Provincial Muslim League to be held at Nowgong on the 9th March 1947. Three MLAs out of twelve members of the Parliamentary Party, who are members of the Working Committee, attended this meeting at Nowgong on the 9th, where a Civil Disobedience Movement for Assam to be launched by the Muslim League was decided upon. On 10th March, the President, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan, started civil disobedience at Tezpur on successive dates.

Thus it will be apparent that the Working Committee declared civil disobedience on the 9th of March, without taking any steps to prepare the country for such a move. They took no approval of their scheme from the Central Committee of Action, as is necessary under the Muslim League Constitution. The Civil Disobedience Movement, thus launched, was against the eviction policy of the Congress Government which they have adopted since February 1946.

The Parliamentary Party, consisting of 31 Muslim League MLAs, was ordered by the Working Committee to abstain from the session of the Assembly, although they had no powers to dictate to the Parliamentary Group. To preserve the unity of the Muslim League, the Parliamentary Party acted as directed by the Working Committee and withdrew from the Assembly session. We sent representatives at Delhi to place the situation in Assam before the Central Committee of Action which deputed Chaudhry Khaliq-uz-Zaman to Assam. The resolution adopted by the Working Committee of the Provincial Muslim League at the instance of Chaudhry Khaliq-uz-Zaman may have been shown to you by your Secretary as it appeared in the press. For the prestige of the Muslim League organization, and as we are presented with a *fait accompli* by the President of the Provincial Muslim League, we are forced to adopt the resolution of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Ever since the 30th of March, my co-workers have been doing their level best to organize the people for launching the Movement vigorously when the approval of the Central Committee of Action will be obtained. But up till now, excepting in two areas, the response has been poor. There is absolutely no fund even for the travelling expenses of the co-workers, not to speak of any relief to sufferers from the Movement. I have borrowed Rs 2,000 from a certain fund to carry on. It was out in the Press that Bengal is raising a lac of rupees to help us and we have also appealed to the All India Muslim League to help us with a lac of rupees. Up till now, in spite of promises of help by the Acting Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, who accompanied Chaudhry Khaliq-uz-Zaman to Shillong, not a single farthing has been received by me so far from this source. I know that a draft for Rs1,000 was sent by the Bengal Treasurer in the name of our General Secretary at Gauhati. But I do not know what will be the fate of that draft as the General Secretary has already been detained by the Government for violating Section 144 at Dhubri. The Muslims are not at all prepared to launch a big Civil Disobedience Movement; they are disorganized and, as I stated, for want of funds, workers in sufficient numbers could not be sent to different areas to rouse the people.

The Congress Premier and myself met on the 3rd of April to negotiate a peaceful settlement, but up till now nothing concrete has emerged which I can place before you. The entire Assam Valley Hindus, Tribal people and also the Tea Garden labourers are dead set against the Muslim immigrants from Bengal. We can expect no help, no sympathy from them in the Assam Valley in our Civil Disobedience Movement, and we are in a minority in the Assam Valley. Please, therefore, give your best thoughts to the situation in Assam and guide the Committee of Action, who are meeting at your place on the 20th April, and give me directions [about] what to do. If a vigorous Civil Disobedience Movement is to be carried on, it will surely mean much loss of innocent lives and destruction of property. It is a moot point whether by launching such a movement we can dislodge the present Ministry with our 31 Muslim League Members in a House of 108—and yet ‘Down with the Ministry’ is the slogan of this Movement.

The Congress Government has raised the false cry that the Movement is specially designed to bring Assam into the Pakistan Zone. The varied geographical position of Assam will compel her ultimately to align herself with Bengal, for Assam has got no outlet to the outside world except through Bengal and an alienated Bengal can use the stranglehold on the economic life of Assam. Our chief export is 400 million pounds of tea, which must be exported through Calcutta or Chittagong port, and Assam is dependent, except for rice, for every article of daily diet, like salt, sugar, *dal*, wheat products, and other things, on other parts of India and these articles must be moved through Bengal to reach Assam. In the future Constitution of India,

if Assam becomes an independent State or a part of Hindustan while Bengal enjoys [joins] Pakistan, Bengal will have the whip-hand over Assam to make Assam ask for grouping with Bengal. Therefore, in my opinion, it is immaterial if Assam, under her present masters, proves intransigent and refuses to join the grouping. The Muslim League need not, on the score of Assam alone, object to sit in the Constituent Assembly.

As the letter has become inordinately long, I will close here; but I have instructed Mr Abdul Matin to give all further materials about Assam's present and future position verbally to you.

With best regards and sincerest wishes,

Yours fraternally,
SYED M. SA'ADULLAH

13. 'Assam Govt's Eviction Policy Condemned'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 17 April 1947.

'I HAVE noticed that some newspapers are trying to paint the democratic, non-violent and non-communal movement launched by the Muslim League in Assam as a communal one', says Mr Mohd Habibullah Bahar, MLA, Acting Secretary, Bengal Provincial Muslim League in a statement issued from Delhi.

'They are also characterizing this movement', he continues, 'as an 'invasion'—a veritable 'blitz killing' set afoot by Muslim League for the swift conquest of Assam. This I must hasten to clarify, is far from truth. It is not a movement directed against a particular community or a province. It is a life-and-death struggle of the 'have nots' against the human vampires who are sucking their life-blood.

Moreover, the resolution of the Assam Provincial Muslim League Working Committee which has called upon the people of the Province irrespective of religion, caste and creed to support this just movement of the hungry millions, gives the lie direct to the malicious propaganda of some newspapers....

SUPPRESSIVE POLICY

In several districts of Assam not only Bengal Muslims but Hindus of Surma Valley also are not permitted to take possession of land. In Assam Valley Bengali language is being suppressed. It is interesting to find that the tea-garden labourers from CP, Europeans and Nepalis are allowed to settle down everywhere in Assam while on the other hand even the 'protected immigrants' who came long before 1938 are forcibly being evicted.

In Assam today 15 lakhs of tribal people, 18 lakhs of tea-garden labourers, 2 lakhs of Manipuris, 6 lakhs of Scheduled Caste Hindus, several lakhs of Koches and many of the Surma Valley Hindus have raised their voice against this hated 'jungle law' which has been forced upon the people of Assam by a vicious coterie headed by Mr Gopinath Bardoloi.

I warn Mr Bardoloi for the last time that this terrorism will lead him nowhere but to self destruction. It will plunge Assam into turmoil and turbulation indescribable. If he does not change his present policy, I am sure he and his gang will go down to shame amid the curses of nations.

Lastly, I send my hearty congratulations to the brave immigrants and hungry 'have nots' who have stood in such a supreme crisis like a solid rock against which the angry waves of

Bardoloi tyranny are beating recklessly in vain. I do not believe, even for a moment that the might of Assam will prove to be long and interminable. Surely, the sun will rise again. It will herald a new and golden morn. Its crimson rays will touch with all tenderness the graves of those who died for such a noble and righteous cause.

The Bengal immigrants and Assamese 'have-nots' shall win in this present struggle because their cause is just....

14. Case of Mizo People for Self-determination

Extract from a Memorandum Prepared by the Mizo Union, 22 April 1947

S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 130, Installment II to IV, NMML.

Prepared by the MIZO UNION, which has 20,000 enlisted full members and 80,000 associated members. Thus the total members comes to 100,000—which can well represents [*sic*] the entire Mizo people.

Aijal,
North Lushai Hills,
ASSAM.

PRINTED AT THE LOCH PRINTING PRESS—AIJAL.

MIZO MEMORANDUM

Memorandum of the case of the Mizo people for the rights of territorial unity and solidarity and self-determination within the Province of Assam in free India submitted to His Majesty's Government and The Government of India and its Constituent Assembly through the Advisory Sub-Committee for Assam partially Excluded Areas and Excluded Areas.

Pursuant to the Resolutions passed by the General Assembly of the Mizo Union at Aijal in September 1946, subsequently supported by the Mizo Conference at Lakhipur (Cachar) in November 1946, this Memorandum prepared by the Mizo Union and supported by the Mizos outside the Lushai Hills District, represents the desire and wishes of the entire Mizo people of the Lushai Hills, Manipur State, Cachar, Tripura State and the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and others.

The Memorandum seeks to present the case of the Mizo people for territorial unity and integrity of the whole Mizo population and full self-determination within the Province of Assam, for the realization of which an appeal is made to His Majesty's Government the Government of India and its Constituent Assembly to make a special financial provision from year to year for a period of ten years or until such time as the Mizos shall assert that they can maintain their self-determination without this financial provision.

The People and the Land

The Mizos are a numerous family of tribes closely knit together by common tradition, customs, culture, mode of living, language and rites. They are spread over a wide area extending far beyond into the Manipur State, Cachar, Tripura State, Chittagong Hill Tracts and Burma, but, contiguous with the boundaries of the present Lushai Hills District which was curved out arbitrarily for administrative purposes.

The Mizo people have been known under different names. They were first wrongly identified as KUKIS during the time of Lord Warren Hastings when a Raja of Chittagong

sought the help of the British against the so called Kuki raiders; and it continued to be applied to the whole group until 1871. When it was supplanted by the term LUSHAI as a result of the active and prominent part taken by the LUSEIS, a sub-tribe of the Mizo race—against the British Expedition known as the First Lushai Expedition. The present Lushai Hills District was thus carved out of the entire Mizo land for administrative convenience and the Mizo people living within the district came to be known as the Lushais while the other Mizos, left out of the Lushai Hills District and annexed to the surrounding districts, continued to be known as Kukis without their consent. However, the solidarity of the Mizo people as a race and a distinct block is testified by the names of places, mountains and ranges in the Lushai Hills, Cachar, Manipur, Tripura, Chittagong Hill Tracts and Burma, known and called after the names of the several sub-tribes of the MIZO race originally occupying them. Shakespear, Stevenson, Liangkhaia, Shaw, Kingdon-ward and Kim of the Statesman are some of the authorities on this.

The MIZOs have nothing in common with the plains nor with the Nagas or Manipuris or others. They are a distinct block. The area now under their occupation are mostly hilly except the eastern portion of Cachar District extending to BarailRange in the North Cachar Hills. Wherever they go and wherever they are, they carry with them their primitive customs, culture and mode of living in its purest origin, always calling and identifying themselves as MIZOs....

The Mizo Population

- (a) The Mizo people in the Lushai Hills alone number 146,900, with an area of 8,143 sq. miles according to the census of 1941.
- (b) The Mizo population of the Manipur State continuous to the Lushai Hills again comes to about 70,000, with an area of about 3,500 sq. miles.
- (c) The Mizos in the Cachar district contiguous to the Lushai Hills number about 9,000, with an area of about 300 sq. miles.
- (d) In Tripura State contiguous to the Lushai Hills, the Mizos again number approximately 7,500, with an area of about 250 sq. miles.
- (e) In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, also contiguous to the Lushai Hills the Mizo population is generally approximated to be about 5,000 with an area of about 300 sq. miles.
- (f) In the Chin Hills (Burma) also contiguous to the Lushai Hills, who are now commonly known and termed with the Chins, number not less than 90,000, with an area of about 3,500 sq. miles occupied by them.

The total Mizo population of the contiguous areas alone thus comes to roughly 328,400 and the areas about 15,993 sq. miles.

It is a great injustice that the Mizos having one and the same CULTURE, speaking one and the same LANGUAGE, professing one and the same RELIGION, and knit together by COMMON CUSTOMS and TRADITIONS should have been called and known by different names, and thrown among different peoples with their homeland sliced out and given to others.

The whole contiguous of the Mizo population, as detailed above, occupies the middle and most important portion of India's eastern frontier. It is therefore the more imperative that His Majesty's Government, the Government of India and its Constituent Assembly should do the just and proper thing and grant the Mizo their just demand for TERRITORIAL UNITY AND SOLIDARITY....

The Present General Condition of the Country

As stated in the foregoing paragraphs, the Mizo areas are mostly Excluded. The Political Officer is supreme in every respect. The education is mostly carried on by Christian Missionary groups. The general communication of the country is extremely poor. The land is extremely hilly without good roads; and the people poor and simple, primitive and divided into tribes and clans. The higher education is mostly derived from outside the district, but, inspite of this lack of educational and technical training facilities the mass literacy of the Mizo people is highest in Assam. The people are mostly intelligent and as such given equal terms they always outshine their fellow workers of other communities in the field and at home. They are born strategists. Their greatest shortcomings is lack of finance as a result of long neglect on the part of the British in respect of their trade and commerce and limited scope open for them. Their areas stretch from north to south parallel with the Burma border line for over 200 miles. In fact, it presents the most important strategic point for defence along the eastern border of India.

This being the background, it is all the more imperative that the MIZORAM be given Special Financial Provision by the Centre from year to year while allowing them their territorial integrity as anything short of this will be detrimental to their upbringing. In other words, the Centre shall grant Special Financial Provision from year to year for the purpose of development of the country while the district shall join autonomous Assam through Legislature with adequate representation, and be also eligible to the Provincial Services with due reservations, at the same time retaining her territorial integrity and self determination; as otherwise thrown among forty crores of Indians the 328,400 Mizos with their unique system of life will be wiped out of existence.

Our Case

In the light of the facts stated in the foregoing paragraphs and in view of the geographical position and the strategical importance of the MIZORAM for the defence of India and taking into consideration the unique characteristics of Mizo polity and the compact block of Mizo land—This Memorandum is placed with the Authorities for:

- (1) Territorial Unity and Solidarity of the whole Mizo population to be known henceforth as MIZO and MIZORAM for LUSHAI and LUSHAI HILLS district, retaining the sole proprietary rights over the land.
- (2) Full self-determination within the Province of Assam.
 - (a) With a National Council having the supreme legislative authority and executive body and a Judiciary within the district, the composition and functions of which will be prescribed by rules.
 - (b) Any concurrent subjects in which the district may be connected with the Autonomous Province of Assam or India as a whole shall be by negotiations with the National Council which will be set up according to the wishes of the General public; any legislation may be applied to the district only with the sanction of the National Council with any modification.
- (3) Special financial provision by the centre from year to year until such time as the Mizos shall assert that they are able to maintain their territorial integrity and self-determination without this financial provision.

ALL THE ABOVE ITEMS SHALL BE SUBJECT TO REVISION ACCORDING TO THE FUTURE TREND OF EVENTS EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF SECEDING AFTER TEN YEARS.

For this end it is to be understood that the democratic system of Government in its purest form shall at the very outset be introduced.

Passed and approved by the Mizo Union Representatives Conference at Aijal, Lushai Hills, Assam, on 22.4.1947.

Khawtinkhuma MA
President
Vanthuama
General Secretary
The Mizo Union
AIJAL, LUSHAI HILLS

15. 'Bardoloi Greeted with Black Flags in Silchar'

Dawn, 23 April 1947.

SHILLONG, Tuesday.—MR GOPINATH BARDOLOI, Premier of Assam was again greeted today with black flags and anti-Ministry slogans at Silchar on his way back from Aijal. Four Muslim League workers including Messrs Ghulam Jeelany, Chowdhury Abdul Ahad, Salar-e-Zila, Muslim National Guards, were arrested in this connection. According to the statement of Mr Mukabbir Ali Majumdar, MLA, the arrested Muslims were assaulted.

Soon after their arrest all Muslim shops were closed down and a huge procession of about 15,000 people, shouting 'Down with Bardoloi Ministry', 'Down with Eviction Policy' and 'Long Live Muslim League', paraded the town. The procession was followed by a mammoth public meeting.

It may be stated that Mr Bardoloi had to face similar demonstrations at Karimgunj on April 16. The biggest demonstration ever staged by Muslims of Karimgunj in connection with civil disobedience movement was on April 18. A procession of about 50,000 people was taken out. Sixteen of the demonstrators were arrested by the police.

MEETINGS AND PROCESSIONS

Meetings and processions were also held at Cachar on April 15. Mr Moinul Huq Chowdhury and Qazi Ibrahim Ali addressed the gathering. Some Jamiat quislings tried to create disturbance, but their attempts were not allowed to succeed due to remarkable discipline of the Musalmans.

At Hailakandi, Muslims took out a huge procession in defiance of Section 144 and held a meeting at which Mr Moinul Huq Chowdhury condemned the Congress Government for its tyrannical administration.

In all these places Mr Abdul Matlib Mazumder, a member of the Bardoloi Cabinet, had to pass through black flag demonstrations.

Mr Abdulla Nurul Huq, acting President, Provincial Muslim League, and Mr Abdul Hye, MLA, made whirlwind tours in some parts of Kamrup and Nowgong last week.

In an interview to the 'Dawn' correspondent they said that the League's civil disobedience movement has spread into the remote villages of Assam.

The Police also raided the house of Mr P.M. Shahabuddin, Vice-President, North Sylhet District Muslim League at 3 o'clock this morning and took into custody his nephew Jan Mohammad Khan, an important League worker in Sylhet.

Five Muslim National Guards Messrs Abdul Hossain, Salar Zila, Abdul Manik Muhammad Mushabib, Abul Sayeed and Abdul Bari were also arrested. This morning the Committee of Action, Assam Provincial Muslim League met at Shillong and took stock of the latest position regarding the present civil disobedience movement.

It appointed Messrs Abdullah Nurulhuq, Abdul Hye and Syed Abdul Rauf to enquire into police firing at Govindapur that resulted in the death of 25 unarmed immigrants. Nineteen immigrant families were evicted from Gohain Gaon, ten miles from Jorhat town, without any notice on April 2nd according to a report reaching Provincial Muslim League Office.

16. Savarkar's Stand on the Assam Situation

Telegram from V.D. Sarvarkar to Gopinath Bardoloi, 26 April 47

S.P. Mookerjee Papers, File No. 95, Part I, Installment II to IV, NMML.

Savarkar Sadan
Bombay 28

To
The Editor,

The following Telegram has been sent by Veer Savarkarji to the Hon'ble Mr Gopinath Bardoloi, Prime Minister, Government of Assam. Please publish the same in your paper and oblige.

Yours faithfully,
G.V. Damle,
Secretary

'Hindu Sanghathanists resent cowardly compromises with Aggressors, which cannot but breed further aggressions. Moslem trespassers old or new must be ejected to a man and no inch in Assam should be surrendered. It is by yielding inches in the past that the Hindus are challenged today to surrender the whole of Hindusthan. Hindus in Assam are sons of those sires, who beat back Aurangzebian armies. Are they to yield today to these League rabbles? Assam must continue as a valorous Hindu Province discharging its ancient mission in defending and extending the Eastern Frontiers of Akhand Hindusthan.'

Savarkar

17. Settlement of Immigrants in Tribal Areas of Assam

Letter from Gopinath Bardoloi to Vallabhbhai Patel, 27 April 1947

SPC, Vol. V, pp. 16-18.

Constitution House
New Delhi

Respected Sardarji,

I enclose herewith a copy of my letter to Sir Akbar Hydari on his proposal for the settlement of immigrants and other people in the tribal areas in Assam on the north of the Brahmaputra. The reasons I have indicated in that letter will, I am sure, convince you that any action on that line at this present juncture is bound to be construed as an attempt on the part of the

Government of India to convert Assam into a Pakistan and is bound to encourage the Muslim League to create more disorder and lawlessness in the province as a direct consequence of this action. Already the Muslim League has widely circulated that by the appointment of Sir Akbar Hydari the Government of India has allowed Assam to be converted into a Pakistan—a fact which possibly Sir Akbar Hydari does not know.

As a Member of the Interim Government, I earnestly appeal to you to kindly see that no reason whatsoever is given to encourage the forces of lawlessness and disorder in the province, which is already passing through a great ordeal.

Yours sincerely,
Gopinath Bardoloi

PS.

I am sending herewith a copy of the reply he sent immediately after the receipt of the letter.

ENCLOSURE

Constitution House
New Delhi
27 April 1947

My dear Sir Akbar,

Since after you had spoken to me [about] your plan regarding the settlement of immigrants and other people in the tribal areas, I had an opportunity of consulting two colleagues of mine—Honourable Mr B.K. Das and Honourable Rev Nichols-Roy on the subject, and they are equally emphatic that this will be the most unpopular and dangerous measure that you could adopt for the province. I am afraid you do not know the sentiments of the people of those areas. Even now they are contesting the rights of the British people to collect taxes from them, and often times [this resulted] in disputes between the Sikkim Government and the British Government. Any attempt at colonization of those areas during this period of transition will immediately be interpreted as an attempt at conquest, resulting in the creation of hostile elements where we should have nothing but goodwill for them.

Secondly, so far as the Ministry is concerned, with the threat of civil disobedience of the Muslim League, with the ultimate object of the Pakistanization of Assam, the Ministry will become extremely unpopular and lose its hold on the people altogether if the scheme is even contemplated to be put into action in the near future.

I therefore most earnestly request you to drop this idea for the present. We are really very much perturbed. We fear that even if a scent of this idea gets out the Muslim League will be strengthened in their attempt to create disorder in Assam by their civil disobedience which is already on.

I shall discuss this matter with Sardar Patel and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. If I find an opportunity I shall let you know.

Yours sincerely,
G.N. Bardoloi



18. 'Assam League Backs Out'

The Hindustan Times, 28 April 1947.

The League.—Congress agreement over the eviction policy of the Assam Government has fallen through on account of Mr Saadulla's failure to carry his party with him. The agreement, it is learnt, was in no sense a one-sided compromise.

The question of League agitation in Assam was considered at the recent Governors' conference.

The Governor of Assam is reported to have conveyed to the Viceroy the desire of Mr Saadulla to get the whole question reopened. This Mr Saadulla considered necessary to save the League from the indignity of having to ask for a truce.

The Assam Government, true to its policy of arriving at an amicable settlement, gave the necessary handle to Mr Saadulla. At the intervention of Sir B.N. Mitter, the Assam Premier, Mr G.N. Bardoloi, agreed to discuss the question anew with Mr Saadulla. Both the agreement and the statement Mr Saadulla was to have issued after the terms of the agreement had been announced were drafted and fully approved by Mr Saadulla in the presence of Sir B.N. Mitter.

The agreement and the statement explicitly declared that the League would withdraw its civil disobedience movement unconditionally. The acts of violence indulged in by the League in Assam were openly denounced in both these documents. All along Mr Saadulla behaved as if he had the mandate of the party to carry on and conclude the negotiations. The Assam Government reaffirmed its previous offer to get individual cases examined by an impartial tribunal.

The failure of Mr Saadulla to get his party to ratify the agreement which was more or less drafted by him should logically result in his resignation from the leadership of the party.

Mr Bardoloi, it is learnt, has wired to the Assam Governor to permit him to release all relevant papers to the Press to show to the public that the responsibility for the rejection of the agreement lies with the Muslim League which has virtually disowned their leader.

19. Note on Muslim Majority Areas in Assam

Letter from Abdul Matin Chaudhury to K.H. Khurshid, 28 April 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 617–21.

KENCH'S TRACE, SHILLONG

My dear Mr Khurshid,

I promised to send an important Note about Assam with maps to Mr Jinnah. I am sending them herewith. Please hand over these to him.

Yours sincerely,

ABDUL MATIN CHAUDHURY

Enclosure

ABSOLUTE MUSLIM MAJORITY AREAS IN ASSAM

The areas in Assam, contiguous to Bengal, in which the Muslims form absolute majority over all the other communities combined, consist of two zones, (1) the Surma Valley Muslim Zone, and (2) the Assam Valley Muslim Zone.

SURMA VALLEY MUSLIM ZONE

The Surma Valley Muslim Zone comprises the entire district of Sylhet and the plains portion of the neighbouring district of Cachar. The district of Cachar consists of three sub-divisions, that is, Hailakandi, Silchar and North Cachar Hills. Hailakandi and Silchar sub-divisions are included in the plains portion of the district of Cachar. Population of this Zone is as follows:

	[Population]	Percentage
Muslims	21,24,635	57
Scheduled [Castes]	4,16,286	11
Other Hindus	9,53,736	25
Tea Garden Tribals	2,16,642	6
Total	37,20,520	

The details of the above are as follows:

SYLHET DISTRICT	[Population]	Percentage
Muslims	18,92,117	60.7
Scheduled [Castes]	3,64,510	11.0
Other Hindus	7,85,004	25.0
Tea Garden Tribals	65,627	2.0
Total	31,16,602	

HAILAKANDI SUB-DIVISION

(CACHAR DISTRICT)	[Population]	Percentage
Muslims	85,963	51.0
Scheduled [Castes]	11,381	6.0
Other Hindus	37,787	22.0
Tea Garden Tribals	29,585	17.0
Total	1,66,536	

SILCHAR SUB-DIVISION

(CACHAR DISTRICT)	[Population]	Percentage
Muslims	1,46,555	30.9
Scheduled [Castes]	40,395	9.0
Other Hindus	1,30,447	29.9
Tea Garden [Tribals]	1,10,106	27.0
Total	4,37,284	

CACHAR PLAINS

(HAILAKANDI & SILCHAR SUB-DIVISIONS COMBINED)	Population	Percentage
Muslims	2,32,528	38.5
Scheduled [Castes],	51,776	8.5
Other Hindus	1,68,734	27.9
Tea Garden Tribals	1,39,691	23.1
Total	6,03,820	

ASSAM VALLEY MUSLIM ZONE

The Assam Valley Muslim Majority Zone runs through Goalpara and Dhubri sub-divisions in Goalpara district into Barpeta sub-division in Kamrup district. It consists of (1) Mankachar, (2) South Salmara, (3) Lakhipur, (4) Dhubri, (5) Golakganj, (6) Bilashipara, (7) North Salmara *Thanas* (Police Stations) in Goalpara district (8) Sorbhog, (9) Barpeta and (10) Tarabari *Thanas* of Barpeta sub-division in Kamrup district. The population figures and percentages are given below:

ASSAM VALLEY MUSLIM MAJORITY ZONE

<i>Thana</i>	Total	Muslims [Castes]	Scheduled Hindus	Caste	Tribals
(1) Mankachar	39,671	31,543	1,034	6,137	957
(2) South Salmara	89,671	82,794	900	6,071	82
(3) Lakhipur	81,391	56,467	192	13,951	10,781
(4) Dhubri	94,146	61,469	2,571	25,593	4,513
(5) Golakganj	85,464	37,396	1,425	45,609	1,057
(6) Bilashipara	1,01,584	52,958	2,186	33,195	13,265
(7) N. Salmara	1,06,463	52,262	6,851	47,213	137
(8) Sorbhog	1,22,381	63,594	981	36,942	20,763
(9) Barpeta	1,80,520	98,041	8,997	66,294	7,185
(10) Tarabari	65,265	55,339	1,047	8,225	652
Total	9,66,556	5,91,843	26,183	2,61,183	59,302
Percentage	100	61.2	2.7	29	6.1

[Note: The totals in the above tables are incorrect and have been given as in the original.]

DETAILS OF PERCENTAGES, *THANA* BY *THANA*

<i>Thana</i>	Muslims	Scheduled [Castes]	Other Hindus	Tribals
(1) Mankachar	79.5	2.6	15.4	2.4
(2) South Salmara	92.3	1.0	6.7	0.9
(3) Lakhipur	69.3	0.2	17.1	13.0
(4) Dhubri	65.2	2.7	27.1	4.7
(5) Golakganj	43.7	1.6	53.3	1.2
(6) Bilashipara	52.1	2.1	32.6	13.5
(7) N. Salmara	49.2	6.4	44.3	1.0
(8) Sorbhog	51.9	0.8	33.1	16.9
(9) Barpeta	54.3	4.9	36.7	3.4
(10) Tarabari	84.7	1.6	12.6	0.9

**DISTRICTS IN WHICH MUSLIMS, THOUGH NOT IN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY
YET FORM THE SINGLE LARGEST GROUP**

District	Muslims	Scheduled	Other	Tribals
<i>Numbers</i>		[Castes]	Hindus	
Goalpara	4,68,924	23,434	2,83,789	2,37,993
Cachar	2,32,950	51,961	1,73,855	1,78,264
Nowgong	2,50,113	59,214	2,29,137	1,66,525
<i>Percentages</i>				
Goalpara	46.2	2.3	27.9	23.4
Cachar	36.3	8.1	27.1	27.8
Nowgong	35.1	8.3	32.2	23.4

SUB-DIVISIONS IN WHICH MUSLIMS FORM THE LARGEST GROUP

Sub-division	Muslims	Scheduled	Other	Tribals
<i>Numbers</i>		[Castes]	Hindus	
Dhubri (Goalpara Dist)	3, 37,072	8,995	1,94,322	1,75,475
Goalpara (Goalpara Dist)	1,32,852	14,379	88,467	55,322
Barpeta (Kamrup Dist)	2,22,774	11,803	1,74,127	45,339
Silchar (Cachar Dist)	1,46,555	40,395	1,30,947	1,10,106
<i>Percentages</i>				
Dhubri	47.00	1.20	27.10	24.50
Goalpara	46.20	2.30	27.90	23.40
Barpeta	49.49	2.50	38.30	09.90
Silchar	30.90	9.00	29.90	27.00

POSITION OF HILL DISTRICTS IN ASSAM

The position of the four Hill districts of Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Garo Hills, Naga Hills and Lushai Hills demands closer scrutiny. In these districts Hindus, including Scheduled Castes, are from 1.6 to 10 per cent only, the Hill tribals forming the overwhelming proportion of the population, as the following statistics will show:

Area	Hindus	%	Muslims	%	Tribals	%
Khasi & Jaintia Hills	12,739	10.7	1,555	1.3	1,03,567	87.2
Garo Hills	14,307	6.7	10,398	4.6	1,98,474	88.2
Naga Hills	4,198	2.2	531	0.2	1,84,766	97.3
Lushai Hills	2,447	1.6	101	0.6	1,47,042	96.7

Obviously with [only] 2–10 per cent [of the total] population in the Hill districts, the Hindus have no right to claim domination over the Hill tribes of these four Hill districts forming 87 to 97 per cent of the population.

On the other hand, Muslim Zones have a greater claim to these Hill districts on the grounds of contiguity, commercial intercourse and strategic defence.

Lushai Hills have no physical contiguity with the remnant [*sic* for rest of] Assam. Access to Lushai Hills can only be through Pakistan Zones in Bengal and Assam. As the last War has shown, Lushai Hills and Naga Hills are a necessity to the Pakistan Zone for its strategic defence. Garo Hills are surrounded practically on three sides by overwhelming Muslim Zones

in Bengal and Assam, its main outlets to outside world lie through the predominantly Muslim areas in Bengal and Assam. Khasi and Jaintia Hills have close historical association with the predominantly Muslim district of Sylhet, the plain portion of the ancient Kingdom of Jaintia forming even today a part of Sylhet district.

20. 'Assam Government Not in Mood to Settle with League'

Dawn, 29 April 1947.

SHILLONG, Monday.—INDISCRIMINATE arrests including that of a member of the League Committee of Action, unjust police firings over peaceful demonstrators, even during days of negotiations which clearly reveal that there was 'no change of heart on the part of the party in power', dashed to ground all hopes of settlement with the Congress Government, says a resolution adopted by the Committee of Action, Assam Provincial Muslim League over three-day talks between the Congress Government and the Muslim League initiated by Sir B.N. Rau, Constitutional Adviser, Government of India.

Syed Mohammad Saadulla, Chairman, Committee of Action, deeply regretted in a chat with the pressmen that the talks should have fallen through.

He also revealed that the terms of the settlement offered by the Ministry fell, according to the majority of the Members of the Committee of Action, much short of an honourable compromise.

Syed Saadulla deplored the most thoughtless police outrages despite his request to the Government not to prejudice the prospect of settlement by doing anything provocative to Muslims.

He also expressed concerns over the reported Government instructions to the district officers 'to shoot to kill' League demonstrators.

Asked whether there was still any room for settlement, Syed Saadulla replied in affirmative but added that in the absence of Mr Gopinath Bardoloi, the Chief Minister, further talks would be useless.

He disclosed that he would undertake extensive tour 'to pacify the people' so that nothing untoward happened.

RESOLUTION

The text of the resolution adopted by the Committee of Action last night, has been released by its Chairman, Mr Muhammad Saadullah.

The resolution is as follows: 'The Committee of Action after hearing their Chairman, the acting Presidency [*sic*], Vice-President and the acting General Secretary of the Assam President, Vice-President and the trend of talks they had with the representatives of the Ministry and the negotiations that were carried out came to the conclusion that it did not reveal a change of heart of the party in power inasmuch as that even during the two days of negotiation at Shillong, a member of the Committee of Action was arrested at Silchar and police firing was resorted to without the slightest justification, causing the deaths of innocent and unarmed peaceful demonstrators at Mankachar and Sylhet, apart from the heavy number of injured and they have been reluctantly compelled to inform the Government that there is no point in carrying on negotiation'.

An API message adds:

Questioned whether there was any room for further negotiation, Mr Saadulla replied: 'The Muslim League is not unwilling to come to an honourable compromise, but according to the majority of members of the Committee of Action, the terms of settlement offered by the Ministry do not constitute either a suitable or an honourable settlement'.

Giving the background of the negotiations, Mr Saadulla paid a tribute to the efforts of Sir B.N. Rao to effect a settlement, but regretted that they had failed.

He regretted that the Premier was absent and there was little prospect of resumption of further talks, if any, till he returned to the headquarters on May 10.

Meantime, he did not know what would happen to Assam as the situation had definitely deteriorated due to what he called 'provocation to peaceful demonstrators'.

Mr Bishnu Ram Medhi, Revenue Minister, who is now in charge of the Home Department has issued the following statement to the resolution adopted last night by the Committee of Action, Assam Provincial Muslim League:

I have received a letter from Mr Mohammad Saadulla today at 10:30 a.m. forwarding the resolution of the Committee of Action, Assam Muslim League. It is regrettable that he could not persuade the members of the Committee of Action to take a reasonable attitude and abandon the present civil disobedience movement which has already degenerated into an out-burst of violence for which many reasonable persons have already expressed regret and alarm.—API

21. Impact of Bengal Partition on Assam

Extract from Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Gopinath Bardoloi, 1 May 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 18, NMML.

I sat next to Mr Bardoloi at luncheon on 1st May. He told me that Assam would make no difficulties about the partition of Sylhet, since the general view was that they belonged to Bengal, and would be no loss to the rest of the Province. The only people who might kick up a fuss would be the 40 per cent Muslim minority in the Sylhet district.

I asked him what solution he would prefer for Bengal, from the point of view of Assam. He replied that he would like Bengal to remain unified and join Hindustan, since this would give Assam the very best access to the rest of Hindustan.

If Bengal remained unified and joined Pakistan, it would virtually strangle Assam. If Bengal remained unified and independent they would have to negotiate access through Bengal, but it would not be so difficult as if Bengal had joined Pakistan.

If they had partition he expected to get access to Hindustan through Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri.

He shared with me the regret that Sir B.N. Rau had failed in his attempt to reach a settlement in Assam recently and attributed this to the shooting that had taken place during his mediation.



22. Report from Assam Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Assam for the Second Half of April 1947,
3 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.

1. Political.—The result of the demonstration march through Goalpara district has been variously interpreted but there has certainly been a waning of activity, and some reported reaction among Assam Muslims on the South Bank against the Disobedience campaign. An unfortunate incident took place on the 22nd April at Mankachar; some Assam Riflemen were trying to make purchases in the bazaar, while Muslim League National Guards attended the bazaar in numbers to enforce a boycott of the Assam Rifles enjoined by Maulavi Abul Kasem, MLA. A sepoy was jostled by a National Guard who after an altercation wrestled with him for his rifle, and was struck by another rifleman. The sepoys then concentrated and attempted to leave the bazaar, but were followed and stoned by a growing crowd which eventually endeavoured to surround them near the entrance to their camp close by the police station. A brick hit a Rifleman and knocked him down whereupon some shots were fired in the air to warm off the mob while he was being rescued, but this proving ineffective further firing took place at the crowd which resulted in the death of two persons and a number of injuries, though most of the latter appeared to have been caused by the stampede itself. There is some reason to believe that an inhabitant fired a shot gun in the excitement, as one man appears to have been injured by pellets. Altogether 27 rounds were fired by the sepoys. Attempts have since been made to rally more sober elements among the Muslim community with some success. It has apparently been decided not after all to shift bazaar to the 'Pakistan Kila' and there has been talk on the part of Maulavi Abul Kasem of his surrender and that of other wanted leaders. On the other hand, Khan Bahadur Abdul Latiff, MBE, who has considerable local influence, is reported to be considering the demand that he should join the League....

Elsewhere in the Assam Valley, the Disobedience movement has languished. At the close of the previous fortnight an attempt to hoist the League flag at Talasbari in Barpeta was made but frustrated. In Darrang the action taken by way of detaining or restricting individuals may have partly disrupted the movement, though it is said that the determination of encroachers to resist eviction is maintained. So far the total number of orders of detention issued is 64 and the number restricted in movement from 20. It would appear that many orders served in Darrang have not been executed, the subjects having gone to ground. Proposals are being considered to deprive active resisters of licenses and permits issued by the Supply organization but where the League is powerful, other dealers are not always available to take their place owing to fear of victimization. The calling in of licensed weapons is likely to prove more effective....

2. Communal.—There has been little disturbance of a definitely communal nature, but rumour on several occasions succeeded in developing a marked degree of panic. At Samaguri in Nowgong a story of alleged arson led to the despatch of an armed party to deal with the reported breach of the peace, but the news was found to be false. At Bhowanipur in Kamrup the sounds made during a religious festival in a Hindu village led to an assembly of people in a neighbouring Muslim immigrant quarter who apprehended attack. When the latter gathered in their turn the Hindus assumed that the attack would come from the immigrants and put themselves in a state of defence: both parties thus remained until 3 a.m. when an armed party arrived from the Police Station, having been informed by messenger of the excitement. At

Rupahihat in Nowgong apprehension of trouble led the shop-keepers to ask for an armed guard. This was deputed but owing to increased apprehension caused by this very fact, the *hat* remained practically closed.

The Ahoms continued to criticize the eviction programme but illogically they indicate that when they are in a position to assert their will they will attempt to exclude *all* foreigners from upper Assam.

A curious incident in the movement for elevation of the depressed classes took place at Nowgong where sweepers visited all Hindu tea stalls of the town demanding tea to be served, but were refused. They left peacefully but threatened that they would have to take other steps....

4. Law and Order.—Meetings of a distinctly inflammatory nature have not been confined to the Muslim League. Jallianwala Bagh Day was widely celebrated. In a large procession in Nowgong held by Sikhs and Hindus on the 12th April, the birth day of the Sikh faith, swords were carried and guns were fired into the air. Much exception was taken to the martial speech of one Gurbachan Singh, who was indeed stopped in his more dangerous remarks by the President. At other meetings in this district, the villagers were exhorted to keep *lathis*, spears and knives in their houses ready for defence against attack by the Muslims.

The most notable thefts from *ex*-military stores reported in this period were of three trucks containing stolen pipes, electrical fans and other electrical machinery, a truck load of motor parts, eight outboard motors and two water pumping engines, all in Lakhimpur. ...

Refugees from Noakhali and Tripura in Darrang district are most unwilling to return to their homes. So far only half have returned and the remainder judge from their letters that the conditions at home are so insecure that they dare not take the risk: they therefore appeal to the Assam Government to continue hospitality. Statements by Mahatmaji on this point have clearly strengthened their resolve to oppose repatriation....

23. 'Assam Muslim Students Protest against Government Repression: May 7 to Be Observed as Martyrs' Day'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 3 May 1947.

GAUHATI, Thursday (delayed)

To mark their protest against the military and police firings on Muslim students and the arrest of the General Secretary of the AI Muslim Students' Federation, the Working Committee of the Assam Muslim Students Federation has declared May 7 as Assam League Prisoners and Martyrs Day.

In pursuance to this declaration, Mr Hasmat Ali, General Secretary of the Assam Provincial Muslim Students Federation, has appealed to the Muslim students of Assam to observe the day by calling strikes and holding demonstrations and meetings.

The first meeting of the Working Committee of the Assam Muslim Students' Federation was held here on Tuesday, Mr Imborah, Deputy President of the Assam Federation presiding. ...

Addressing the Working Committee, Mr Abdullah Nur-ul-Haq, Acting President of the Assam Provincial Muslim League, who was present there by special invitation appealed to the Muslim Students' Federation for their full help and co-operation with the civil disobedience movement launched by the Assam League and added that the Provincial Muslim League would help the Muslim Students' Federation in all possible ways.

He also advised them to unite and requested them to select two kinds of workers from among them, one of fighters and the other of non-fighters.

In the course of his speech, Mr Abdul Hai, MLA, Acting Secretary of the Assam Provincial Muslim League exhorted the audience to go to the interior to explain the civil disobedience movement to the Muslim villagers with a view to organize them. 'The Muslim nation looks to you all to do your duty to your nation. Allah is with us and surely victory will be ours', concluded Mr Abdul Hai.

Miss Asiya Khatoon of Gauhati addressing the members of the Working Committee said: 'I appeal to all Muslim girl students wherever they may be to organize themselves and join hands with our brothers immediately. We cannot waste a single minute and we should prepare now to go ahead'.

Speaking next, Mr Hasmat Ali, General Secretary, Assam Provincial Muslim Students Federation, said that as soon as he assumed office, he was confronted with an important issue namely, the eviction policy of the Assam Congress Government. A resolution passed at the 6th annual session of the Assam Provincial Muslim Students' Federation held at Sylhet on March 4 last, requested the Assam Muslim League to chalk out a definite programme against the eviction policy.

Just after the launching of the civil disobedience movement by the Assam Provincial Muslim League, I with some other workers toured several villages and organized and addressed many meetings with a view to explain to the villagers the objects of our movement.

'In all places where eviction was going on, village markets observed complete hartal in response to the call of our workers. Several enthusiastic workers courted arrest in Golpara, Barpet and Surma Valley'.

'In spite of the military which opened fire at some places, we called upon all branches of the Muslim Students' Federation to plunge themselves into the civil disobedience movement, but insisted upon them to carry on only a non-communal campaign'.—OPI.

24. Nehru Comments on Assam Situation and Jinnah's Attitude

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Akbar Hydari, 24 May 1947

SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 172-3.

Mussoorie

My dear Hydari,

I have just received your letter of the 18th May. I came up to Mussoorie four days ago to see my daughter Indira and for a brief respite. I am going down again tomorrow to Delhi. I expect the next few weeks will be pretty heavy. So I hasten to send you a brief reply from here before I get tied up again with other work.

2. I am not sufficiently conversant with the question of immigration into Assam to be able to say anything worthwhile. It seems to me, however, that the Assam problem is intimately tied up with the all-India problem. It was just possible for the Assam problem to be settled separately when Bardoloi and Saadullah came to some kind of agreement. That agreement having fallen through, I doubt very much if anything else can be done in the near future, except to hold off very serious developments.

3. As a matter of fact everything has been held up because of the political situation. This situation is bound to develop rapidly, for good or ill, during the next few weeks. That development will affect every part of India including Assam.

4. We have arrived at a stage when it is quite impossible to carry on in the way we have so far done. There must be a settlement, and if there is no settlement there must be some other way of ending this crisis. Jinnah's attitude, as ever, has been completely unhelpful. Even when he agrees to things in private, he dissents from the agreement in public. He will not commit himself to anything and wants other people to do so leaving him free to act as he chooses. We are up against something which is neither political nor economic nor reasonable nor logical. Fortunately we have arrived at a stage when we must put an end to this sorry business some way or other. What has been happening in Lahore recently has been pretty bad. It is always possible that this might spread. There is in fact no responsibility at the present moment anywhere. And so long as responsibility is not fixed on a strong authority, these problems will go on.

5. I certainly hope that the decision to post a brigade in Assam will not be reversed. If I can help you in any way in regard to this matter, I shall certainly do so. We must be prepared for all eventualities.

With all good wishes to you and Lady Hydari.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

B. NWFP

1. "You Must Be Prepared to Lay Down Your Life to Defend the Weak"—Qazi Attaullah's Appeal to Red Shirts'

The Tribune, 25 March 1947.

Peshawar, March 24.—Qazi Attaullah, Revenue Minister, Frontier Government addressed thousands of villagers at Rustam in Mardan District, and asked every able-bodied Pathan to support the Khudai Khidmatgar movement and put on red uniform and ceaselessly work for independence of their Pathan homeland during the critical period of transfer of power until June 1948. 'Badshah Khan's day and night efforts during the last quarter of a century,' he said, 'have at last borne fruit and that freedom, for which the Pathans have paid so heavy a price, is now in sight. A handful of privileged class people whose interests are linked with imperialist system are inciting and making brother fight against brother and creating civil war amongst Pathans. They are enemies of Islam and enemies of India and are playing traitors' game. Our toleration towards League's hooliganism has been taken as our weakness. You have to demonstrate your strength in such unmistakable manner that they realize that you are alive. In every town and in every village mobilize your full strength. Afford full protection to minorities and organize programme of meetings, demonstrations and marches from village to village. It will be a blot on the fair name of Islam and Pathans, if even a hair of non-Muslim is touched in your presence. You must be prepared to lay down your life to defend the weak and sacrifice your all for this noble cause.

'We are being ruled', he said 'simply because we are disunited, India's enemies are creating conditions in which slavery can flourish. The achievements of your sacrifices are in danger.

Arise and gird up your loins to defend it with all your might. There is not a minute to be lost. Give a crushing reply to the enemies of your freedom before it is too late’.

After the meeting the huge gathering rushed towards Qazi Sahib and assured him of their steadfast loyalty to Khudai Khidmatgars’ organization. Some old comrades who were staying behind on personal grievances announced they would support and work ceaselessly from now onwards. Shrewd observers and independent elements, who know Pathans’ temperament prophesied that the whole countryside may go red before long.

2. Nehru Demands Caroe’s Resignation

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Olaf Caroe, 26 March 1947

SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 317–18.

New Delhi

Dear Sir Olaf,

Thank you for your letter of the 20th March. I did not go to the Frontier because Lord Wavell asked me not to go just then. I confess I was unhappy about this, and it seemed to me rather odd that I should be asked not to go even on a private and brief visit. I have not believed in the policy of shirking a problem or avoiding risk. I went to the Punjab and I think my visit did good.

Dr Khan Sahib has been here and we have had a number of talks. It is evident that the policy he intends to pursue is not in keeping with your policy. There is an inherent conflict between the two. Indeed I understand that you told him to resign and further said that he and his colleagues had made a mistake in aligning themselves with the Congress. This creates an impossible position at any time and more especially when the province has to face a difficult situation. Most of the officers in the NWFP will naturally follow your lead and this conflict between you and the Ministry will lead to a weakening and deterioration of the administration. We cannot afford to have this at this particular juncture.

My visit to the Frontier last year revealed to me this inherent conflict and I wrote to you at some length about it. Subsequent events have strengthened that conviction. The Governor and his chief officers seem to function more as allies of the opposition than of the Ministry. The reaction of this policy in the Tribal Areas has also been marked. The way the Pir of Manki has been allowed to have a free hand in preaching murder under the sheltering care of local officers is not the kind of thing one expects from an efficient and cooperative administration.

I have received numerous complaints about the rationing system in the Tribal Areas. These complaints resolve themselves in allegations of partiality and unfairness on the part of some of the officers concerned. In this respect also the Pir of Manki appears to be a favoured person. These are allegations which I cannot verify and have no means of verifying.

I have become convinced that the present set-up in the Frontier is unsatisfactory and is leading to trouble. In view of the rapid transition that is going to take place in India, it has become necessary to adapt ourselves immediately to these new conditions.

Some days before Lord Wavell’s departure I wrote to him on this subject. I did not want to trouble him on the eve of his departure, but I felt the urgency of the situation and was compelled by these circumstances to write to him. I pointed out to him that there was a complete absence of a common outlook between you and me, as well as between you and the Frontier Ministry.

In view of this, the only proper course appeared to be your resignation from the Governorship. I do not know if he communicated the contents of this letter to you.

I hope you will forgive me for the frankness with which I am writing to you. The issues before us are too serious for any trifling on our part. I have written more or less briefly and there is much else that I would have liked to put before you. But for the moment this must suffice.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. 'Frontier League Movement Enters Second Month: Tribute to Gallant Muslim Masses'

Report from *Pakistan Times*, 27 March 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 354-5.

PESHAWAR, March 25.—'A full month of trials and tribulations for the Muslims of NWFP has passed and they have entered the second month of their brave fight with the Congress Government who have killed civil liberties in the Province and let loose a reign of terror in an all-out bid to crush the Muslim League,' says Mr Sher Bahadur Khan, Secretary, War Council, Provincial Muslim League, in a statement.

He adds: 'The struggle has been perfectly peaceful and non-communal throughout the Province except at Peshawar and some parts of Hazara, where it was marred by outbursts of violence as a result of firing by the military on the opening day of the Budget Session of the Frontier Legislative Assembly. While the War Council strongly disapproved the conduct of those who have indulged in acts of violence against their neighbours, it has nothing but admiration for the willing and ready response made to their (War Council's) appeals by the Muslim masses and the brave and courageous fight put up by them in every nook and corner of the Province.'

Mr Sher Bahadur continues: 'As we look back we find the path we have trodden strewn with corpses of gallant people who have fallen for the sacred cause of Islam and civil liberties. Let us pay our homage to the departed heroes by stepping into the breach ourselves and pledge not to retreat our steps until the goal is reached.'

MORE ARRESTS

Pakistan Day was observed throughout the Province with great enthusiasm. Reports of the meetings and the processions culminating in the arrests of a large number of Muslim Leaguers have been received from several places. Khan Mohd Ishaq Khan, the newly elected MLA, was arrested along with two volunteers for organizing a procession in Mardan.

At Abbottabad the Muslim League volunteers picketed the police station and police posts peacefully. No arrest was made.

A big procession was taken out at D.I. Khan and 56 persons offered themselves for arrest.

Meetings and processions were also organized at Bannu and Kohat. One hundred and thirty-eight Muslim workers were arrested temporarily at Bannu while no arrest was made at Kohat.—OPI.



4. 'Frontier Repression'

1 April 1947

Editorial from *Pakistan Times* as cited in *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. I. Part II, pp. 366–7.

What transpired between Dr Khan Sahib and Pandit Nehru before the arrest of the Pir Sahib of Manki Sharif is not known, but popular opinion has it that Dr Khan Sahib must have obtained some assurance of support from the Central Government if things got too hot for him. They are hot enough as it is and the temperature is bound to shoot up as a result of Dr Khan's latest indiscretion. The indefatigable Pir Sahib of Manki is reputed to be one of the most influential personalities in the land of the Pathans and his arrest will doubtless extend the arena of conflict between the Khan clique and the Frontier people. The conflict has been confined so far to the towns and villages of 'settled districts'. It might easily extend now to the crags and gorges of the tribal belt. There is no doubt that the present League Movement in the Frontier Province owes a good deal of its dynamics to the personality of the Pir Sahib, and the Khanna-Khan combine must have staked heavily on the hope that his arrest will be something in the nature of a *coup de grace*. It will not be the first time that a tyrannical administration banking on ruthlessness and repression, to crush the will of the people, had failed. For what Khan Sahib and his colleagues are up against are not a few individuals but a whole people, and the arrest of popular leaders does not pacify but provokes them further. This very commonplace truth has been demonstrated so often in the last few years that no sane person will desire to contest it. We are yet a long way, however, from the age of reason and every administration, unless it is willing to abdicate when the people demand its abdication, continues to try out for itself the same weapons which they know have failed their sturdier predecessors. To add impertinence to injustice, Dr Khan Sahib continues to claim that he enjoys the confidence of the Pathans because he is still backed by a parliamentary majority. It is true that the weightage enjoyed by the Frontier minorities and the confusion and muddled thinking engendered by Congress propaganda and Congress friends at the time of elections did manage to beguile the Frontier people into putting the Khan clique into power but the confusion has since been laid to rest and the issues have become clearer. When the Pathans put Khan Sahib's Ministry into power, they obviously made no allowance for the fact that the Ministry would be changed into a joint stock company and govern only for the benefit of its own share holders, that people's food will be bartered for political support and the dictates of Wardha will have precedence over the wishes of the Pathans. Now that all these facts are before the people, they have challenged Khan Sahib to submit his Ministry to their revised verdict, and Dr Khan Sahib's answer has been arrests, *lathi*-charges, bullets and tear-gas bombs. Even craven hearted and cowardly sections of the Indian people have stood up to these weapons with courage and it is inconceivable that the brave and freedom-loving Pathans will give in to them. The result, therefore, has been an unprecedented political upsurge among all sections of the Pathan people and purdah, have forsaken their age-old immobility to lead political processions. The tempo of the Movement is daily on the rise and as the arrest of the Pir Sahib of Manki shows, the Khan Government intends to match this by a corresponding increase in terror. The conversations with the Central Government might obtain for them a greater amount of powder and steel but nothing can procure for them Pathans' goodwill or buy off the popular indignation against their corrupt and inept regime. The only wise and democratic course open to them is to submit to the will of the people and if they are not satisfied that the happenings of the last few weeks are a sufficient indication of this will, they can test its strength in fresh elections. At first sight the

uphill path of reason may appear more unpleasant than the downward slope of folly but on second thought even the most headstrong adventurer can see that even though it is easier to slide down a slope it is also easier to break your neck.

5. 'Lahore Muslim Women Take Part in Frontier Movement'

2 April 1947

Report from *Pakistan Times* as cited in *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 371.

Lahore Muslim women gave a lead to their menfolk during the weekend when a batch of four of them left Lahore for Peshawar to participate in the Pathan struggle for restoration of civil liberties. They included Begum Fatima, Miss Nasira Siddiqui, Begum Zubeida Shah and Begum Karim Dad. News of their safe arrival in Peshawar has been received here.

This batch of women will be followed by others. The Punjab Muslim League Women's Committee, which has sponsored the present move to help actively our Pathan brethren, hopes to send *jathas* of Muslim women regularly.

6. 'Political Prisoners in Kohat Break Doors of Barracks'

3 April 1947

Report from *Pakistan Times* as cited in *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 372.

PESHAWAR, April 1.—The NWFP Government issued the following communiqué last night: 'In Kohat this morning about 59 under trial political prisoners broke the doors of their barracks and came out in the jail compound and began to damage jail property. The prisoners were reloked in their barracks.

'Cases of incendiarism also occurred in Kohat City today. Some shops were burnt and ten looted. The Superintendent of Police was assaulted by a Muslim League worker near the jail gate. Detachments of police and troops are patrolling the town. A curfew has been imposed for one week from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. and all public meetings and processions have been banned.

'At Peshawar Jail this morning some of the political prisoners set fire to three tents and assaulted two convict warders who received injuries. Curfew in Peshawar City has been extended for one week.

'Two live bombs were discovered today near Akora on the main railway line from Peshawar. The down Frontier Mail was consequently delayed. Last night ten bundles of luggage of Hindu passengers at Nowshera Railway Station were set on fire. A railway *chowkidar* is reported to have fired two shots but the culprits managed to escape.'—API.

7. Governor Considered Partial to the League

Extract from the Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten, M.K. Gandhi and Abdul Ghaffar Khan, 4 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML.

The meeting lasted from 2.30 to 4.30 p.m.

Mr Gandhi brought with him as promised Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Lord Ismay attended the meeting.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan gave a very forthright denunciation of the Governor of the NWFP and all his officials, particularly the political officers dealing with the tribes.

He accused the Governor of being pro-Muslim League and of trying to make the task of the Government under his brother, Dr Khan Sahib, as difficult as possible. He said that the subordinate British officials of the ICS followed his example.

He stated that the tribes were completely under the control of the British political officers and invariably did what they said.

When challenged on this point by Lord Ismay, he quoted the case of the war. Once the political officers told the tribes that the British Empire was engaged in a life and death struggle, the tribes gave no more trouble whatsoever until they were informed that the British had won the war.

C.V.S. and I did our best to refute this theory. I reminded Abdul Ghaffar Khan of the tribes' descent into Peshawar in 1930, which no amount of appeals by the political officers could prevent.

The fact remains that this remarkable old man is firmly convinced that Sir Olaf Caroe and all his officers are intensely pro-League and are doing their best to undermine the position of the Congress on the Frontier.

I asked Mr Gandhi for his views. He said he feared that there were many British members of the ICS, particularly among the highly placed ones, who could not bear to see the British leave India, and who had clung all along to the theory that if they could only support the Muslim League actively, to the point at which it could be held that the British could not leave India to civil war, then the British would be compelled to stay.

He pointed out that the views held by Mr Winston Churchill were so well known that had he been in power or had there been any chance of his returning to power, the line taken by all those ICS officials would have achieved its object.

Lord Ismay said that great as his affection was for his late chief, it was his opinion that if Mr Churchill now by some miracle returned to power, the pressure of public opinion in England would preclude his being able to reverse the present decision. Indeed, all the rest of the Conservative party agreed with the Labour Party's policy, except for mention of the earlier date.

I asked Mr Gandhi for some more examples of biased [*sic*] officials. He said that although he did not know Sir Francis Mudie personally, all his friends in Sind told him that he was extremely pro-Muslim League and much too friendly with his Government.

I pointed out that he had previously agreed with Abdul Ghaffar Khan that Sir Olaf Caroe was insufficiently friendly with his Congress Government in the NWFP, and now he accused Sir Francis Mudie of being too friendly with the Muslim League Government in Sind.

Mr Gandhi replied that he did not wish Governors to be biased [*sic*] one way or the other; their friendliness with their Governments should be the impartial friendliness which a constitutional monarch should bestow upon any Government which came to power.

He advised me most strongly to get rid of any officials who could not be brought to see that they must remain impartial and helpful during the final stages....

8. 'Kohat Muslim Women Demand Fresh Elections'

Dawn, 5 April 1947.

Kohat, Friday.—A meeting of the Muslim women of Kohat was held here recently, with Begum Haji Zabardast Khan presiding.

The following resolutions were passed:

'The present Ministry has lost the confidence of the people and failed to maintain law and order. The meeting demands that fresh elections may be held in the Province and a new Government set up.

'All the League leaders workers and National Guards arrested should be released forthwith.

'The amount of punitive fine imposed and realized from the NWFP tribesmen should be returned to them without delay.

'The meeting demands that the Muslim women convert Aiysha Begum, who embraced Islam on her own free will may be handed over to Muslims at the earliest.

'The Red Shirts injured four children on March 27 by firing. The meeting demands that the culprits should be arrested and dealt with properly according to law.

'The arrest of Pir Saheb of Manki Sharif has greatly injured the feelings of the Muslims; especially the lacs of his disciples, the meeting demands that he should be released forthwith unconditionally and peace restored in the Province'.

9. Chief Secretary, NWFP Government, Gives His Assessment of the Political Situation

Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Lt Col D. de la Fargue, 11 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 191, NMML.

The meeting lasted from 12.45 to 1.45 p.m.

Lt-Col de la Fargue is Chief Secretary, NWFP Government. He stated that in his opinion a free clean election in the Frontier Province would be more likely to return Congress to power than the League. He said it would be necessary to go into Section 93, because if the party in power arranged the elections they would almost always be rigged unfairly. But even with a Section 93 Government, he thought that an election would return Congress to power.

He said that Abdul Ghaffar Khan was the most unpopular man on the Frontier, but that on the other hand his brother Dr Khan Sahib was absolutely first class, and all stories about his being neurotic and unbalanced were nonsense, and arose from his outbursts of ungovernable temper. He himself had even had to strike him once to bring him to his senses, after which they had been better friends than before.

I told him that though in normal times I would consider it highly reprehensible to discuss his Governor with him, I was sure Lord Ismay would agree that in this time of absolute crisis I must obtain a British opinion on Pandit Nehru's shocking report on the Governor. Pandit Nehru had in fact asked for his removal and has spoken to me about it in no unmeasured terms.

Colonel de la Fargue very courageously replied that although the Governor was a man with great knowledge of the Frontier, he was in fact biased against his Congress Government, and had lost the confidence of all fair-minded people in the Province. He said that his continuation in office was in fact a menace to British prestige.



10. 'Revulsion against League in NWFP'

The Tribune, 11 April 1947.

Peshawar, April 9.—A feeling of revulsion against the pointless demonstrations by Muslim Leaguers seems to be overtaking Peshawar city where the normal life of 130,000 citizens has been upset by adherents of the League. It is likely that a deputation may wait upon the Ministry to express the determination of the citizens of Peshawar against toleration of continued interference in their normal life.

League demonstrations are dangerous because they are communal. People remain indoors. The poor labourer and middle class people are hard hit. Tongawalas, carpenters, masons, and other labourers are idle. A large number of non-Muslims have left Peshawar. Many streets bear a deserted appearance. Occupation of street vendors is gone. People have begun accusing the League for such a state of affairs and for depriving them of work and wages in these days of scarcity.

Selfless work done by the Khudai Khidmatgars during the disturbances stands in striking contrast to League activities. When minorities in Peshawar were overawed by hooligans, they left their homes in the villages, took up their residence outside the city and planted themselves in batches in various bazaars and mohallas so that terrorized people may move about freely. They escorted people from their homes to their offices and back. For 15 days, these noble bands of workers, drawn from surrounding villages, in red uniforms served as sentinels of peace and earned the gratitude of the minorities and approbation of all fair-minded Muslims.

'Can the League claim any credit for the present agitation it is conducting in the Frontier Province. Will League leaders repudiate the actions of their volunteers in green uniforms indulging in outrageous-hooliganism'.

'It is high time the Provincial Government takes adequate steps to fulfill its first duty of protecting life, even if it is necessary to ban the League organization in the province', declared a prominent Congress man.

11. Situation of the NWFP Ministry

Extract from the Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten and Maulana Azad, 12 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 192, NMML.

The interview lasted from 4.15 until 5.15 p.m....

He next raised the question of the frontier. He pointed out that in the NWFP there had always been a system of diarchy, and that the Government [Governor] had a responsibility both for the Provincial Government, and for the Political Department for the tribes. In 1938 the Congress Ministry felt the difficulty of this position, and had complained bitterly. Last year after the elections Maulana Azad went to Peshawar, and found that the Congress members, who had won the election, did not want to form a Ministry until they could be assured of the attitude of the new Governor, and the Political Department. He therefore went to see Lord Wavell, who said that Dr Khan Sahib need have no apprehensions for Lord Wavell intended to give the new Governor instructions which would ensure his working in well with the Congress Ministry. Lord Wavell, at Maulana Azad's request, went so far as to write him a letter giving him this assurance, a copy of which Maulana Azad says he will send me. Maluana Azad then went to Peshawar and recommended Dr Khan Sahib to form a Ministry.

No sooner had Sir Olaf Caroe arrived than he made it quite clear that he was violently anti-Congress and pro-League. It was not only a question that he failed to give the full co-operation that Lord Wavell promised, but that he did not bother to conceal his deliberate hostility. Maulana Azad said that he had come to the painful conclusion that it was difficult, if not impossible, for the Congress Ministry to continue to co-operate with the Governor.

I told him that I had had similar reports from Pandit Nehru, Mr Gandhi and Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and that I recognized that this was now acknowledged to be the Congress point of view. I had only been here three weeks and one hour, during which time I have been fully occupied on what I regarded as my first priority, an over-all solution for India. I should continue to treat that as my first priority, and I could not guarantee to devote any time to the Frontier at present. Furthermore, as soon as a decision could be announced, I considered that it would probably be necessary to go into Section 93 in the NWFP, and to hold a new election. After that I would be quite prepared to consider whether the present Governor should continue. I pointed out that Lord Wavell had warned me of these attacks against the Governor, and had recommended me to take noprecipitate action. Maulana Azad regretted that I felt it necessary to order fresh elections in the NWFP, since he pointed out that very fair elections had been held only a year ago, and that beyond some propaganda by the League in the urban areas, nothing had happened to change the situation. In fact he thought that Congress would be re-elected.

I told him that Pandit Nehru had thought that Congress might not be re-elected, since the frontier people were always 'against the Government'. Maulana Azad asked me whether I would be prepared to hold elections in other Provinces, and I replied 'No, not unless it could be proved to me that they were necessary'. He then asked me why I considered an election necessary in the NWFP, and I replied that in all other Provinces the separate electorates enable one to forecast, with considerable accuracy, the results of elections as between the League and Congress, since all Muslims voted for the League. In the NWFP, however, the election was largely an issue between the Congress Muslims and the League Muslims, and of course there was no separate electorate in this case. I said that the results would clearly show whether the inhabitants wanted a League or a Congress Government.

Maulana Azad said that if I was determined to hold an election, he presumed it would only be if I gave a decision in favour of Pakistan, since if the Cabinet Mission plan were accepted he assumed a Coalition Government would be formed in most Provinces, including the NWFP.

12. Pro-League Leanings of the NWFP Governor

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten, 12 April 1947

SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 256-60.

New Delhi

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

With reference to the discussion we had this afternoon, I am sending herewith a copy of the appreciation of Muslim League movement situation in the NWFP on 5-4-47 and the Governor's note below it, about which I spoke to you. I am also enclosing the Fortnightly Report for the second half of March 1947 which gives a statement of the situation up to 31-3-47 and which was apparently prepared on 2 April 1947.

2. I find that Mr Mitchell has less than 17 years' standing. Apparently, the Governor thought that the Ministry had to learn a great deal from him in regard to the situation in the province with which Mr Mitchell had dealt at first hand only for a few days, while the Ministry had been dealing with it for a much longer time. You will also observe that this note was got prepared by the Governor over the head of the Chief Minister and that the Governor's suggestion for conciliation or compromise is in regard to a movement, the two demands of which referred to the return of a widow of a Sikh murdered by Muslims, who was converted forcibly to Islam and married off to a Muslim, but subsequently returned to the Sikh by the Ministry according to her free choice, and to the refund of Rs 75,000 collected from the Tribes under the orders of the Central Government for wanton and wilful raids on a peacefully settled district involving several murders in cold blood and serious loss of property.

3. It is quite clear that if anything the situation demands firm and resolute handling. Instead we have the defeatist mentality of a comparatively young Chief Secretary who is apparently the conscience-keeper of a responsible Governor and the compromise plea of the latter whose especial responsibility it should be to safeguard constitutional government against the organized attacks and criminal conspiracy of irresponsible agitators and not to persuade it into abdicating its functions.

4. Finally, I need only comment on the difference between the Appreciation, by the same officer, of the situation up to 31-3-1947 and his Appreciation only three days later. It seems that all demoralization, danger of breakdown and tiresomeness of the services came about during those three or four miraculous days.

5. The conclusion is irresistible that the note was prepared to serve the purpose of a Governor who has made no secret of his determination to hand over the province to a League Ministry.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

APPRECIATION OF MUSLIM LEAGUE MOVEMENT SITUATION ON 5-4-'47

1. I submit for consideration the following appreciation. I very much hope that it will not prove annoying to hon'ble ministers, whose opinion may be very different. I venture to do this only because things seem to me in the last degree serious and that it is my duty to present this view with its reasons. I do not presume to comment on the merits or otherwise of the Muslim League motives and methods. I shall try to state only facts, following those with my own inferences.
2. The agitation has met with a great deal of success. The jails are full to capacity. To release many offenders in order to make room for more is only an apparent remedy. It can be no permanent solution of this problem. Indeed as far as I can see there is none.
3. All officers down to and including sub-inspectors of police and corresponding ranks are at the limit of their endurance. It is known that the District Magistrate, Mardan, has been recommended leave on medical certificate. It is for all practical purposes a certainty that most or all senior officers at least will crack up sooner or later; and all the sooner as the hot weather comes on. They have been exposed for about two

months already to a physical, nervous, and moral strain which they cannot fairly be asked to endure any longer. They have been abused by responsible people (I state a fact) on grounds of disloyalty, which has not helped. I know that many of them do hold their private political views, though by no means all incline to one particular party. But I have failed to find evidence of any officer's political views having affected the execution of his duty.

4. The rank and file of the police are also exhausted and bewildered. There have been many cases of illness, including T.B., as the result of unbroken weeks of physical strain, irregular and bad meals, sleeping on the ground in the open, and so on.
5. We have heard on the best authority that the military are not happy about the circumstances in which they have had to work; but it is not for me to state any more when the facts are not fully at my disposal.
6. So much for the civil instruments of law and order. I consider that their powers are for all practical purposes exhausted.
7. I now consider the people in three categories:
 - (a) Hindus. It is known that deputations have been to the Mullah Sahib of Manki expressing themselves in favour of Pakistan and craving protection. Many Hindus have stated to me that they have no confidence in any present authority for their protection. The exodus of Hindus from every district to other parts of India goes on every day. A substantial number of the forcible conversions reported has been forcible only in the sense that those converted seized with some degree of spontaneity the chance to live as Muslims in safety rather than as Hindus in danger.
 - (b) Muslims. I have found it impossible to assess accurately the extent to which, if any, the Muslim League have gained ground with the electorate in all districts. Facts conceded by members of the Congress party, however, are that all large towns and Hazara district are now Muslim League sympathizers, active or otherwise. In areas where the Congress party had strong support in the past, reports of meetings usually include mention of hostile demonstrations by Muslim League sympathizers. One opinion, from a person whose opinion is entitled to respect, was to the effect that D.I. Khan and Bannu would show a Muslim League majority, the rural areas of Peshawar and Mardan a Congress majority, with Kohat doubtful but inclined to the Muslim League. The fact does stand out, however, that the Pathans are bitterly divided against one another.
 - (c) The Tribes. I have not been able to find any evidence of Congress sympathizers anywhere except for a small portion of the Mahsuds. The general tribal policy until recently was for them to hold aloof from Indian politics; but at the same time strong sympathy was generally expressed for the Muslim League. But (to avoid what might be very lengthy detail) the arrest of the Mullah Sahib of Manki, and the firing on March 10 at Peshawar, have had very serious consequences. On 4-4-47 the crowd in Peshawar included Afridis and Mohmands. The former said to a senior officer that on that day they were few; next time there might be 20,000. A deputation of Afridi Maliks has told the DC, Kohat, that they cannot (and by inference will not) control their young men. Mohmand jirgas have uttered similar threats. The Dre-Mahsud marakka passed more specific resolutions. I see every possibility of tribal inroads on a large scale culminating in general war. It

happened in 1897 and to a less extent between 1916 and 1919, and there is nothing inherently improbable in the same thing happening again.

8. At this point I leave facts as I have been able to collect them and turn with great diffidence to inferences. One frequently reads and hears that the situation, generally or locally, is under control. I believe that an analysis of the facts shows this not to be correct. From time to time and in different places individual situations have been brought under control. Not so the situation as a whole, regarding which it can only be said that it is being coped with from day to day and from hour to hour. The officers of government at least are unable to see more. If this inference is correct, it follows that measures are required to settle the situation, not merely to cope with it; and it is not only the writer of this note who recommends deliberation on this point. The whole population of the province and the tribal areas, and especially the persecuted minorities and overwrought officials, would welcome the news that something was being done other than a grim continuation of the present struggle.

A.N. Mitchell

5-4-'47

9. I asked the Chief Secretary, with his fresh approach to the question as he has just taken over, to let me have his appreciation of the present position arising in the province as a result of the League movement. His appreciation above, I might differ in certain details of his conclusions, but I consider that his application is broadly correct. It is particularly necessary for the provincial Government to bear in mind the strain on officers, which is very great indeed and may lead to a breakdown if something cannot be done to deal with the trouble at its root instead of with its symptoms. I do not consider that the present agitation is likely to grow less without an attempt to work towards some form of conciliation or compromise.
10. The form of conciliation or compromise is of course not at all easy to envisage. What it might be is an announcement by the provincial Government that, while in no sense they yield their constitutional rights, they wish in the public interest to negotiate a settlement and to that end propose to release all persons imprisoned under Section 40, FCR and for breaches of order under Section 144 CrPC, only retaining in jail those under trial or convicted of offences under the IPC (other than Section 188 IPC). The ultimate aim of such a move would have to be very carefully considered, whether it was leading up to the possibility of a coalition Government or to elections eventually. It would probably be very difficult in any case to hold elections during the hot weather.
11. If no form of conciliation is attempted it will be necessary to consider what action to take should there be a real breakdown of civil forces of law and order, complicated possibly by tribal aggression.
12. I thought it well to get all this on to paper, for I regard it as a matter of utmost importance on which close thought is necessary.

O.K. Caroe
Governor

7-4-47

A.N. Mitchell
7-4-47

13. 'Tribal Jirgas Resolve to Achieve Pakistan'

Dawn, 14 April 1947.

Peshawar, Sunday.—'We reiterate our whole hearted support for Pakistan which is the only solution of the Indian political problem and failing which there is going to be bloodshed and chaos in India. We further urge upon the British Government to concede it forthwith, otherwise we will be forced to demand all those areas and provinces which were once governed by the Indian Muslims during the Moghul rule and will offer any sacrifice for the attainment of that object', says a resolution unanimously adopted at a joint Jirga of the South Waziristan and the Kurram Agencies held at Parachinar on Saturday, according to a telegram received, from the representatives of the Kurram Agency.

In another resolution, the Jirga stated: 'We, the tribal people, are a free people and will remain so. We do not want the Patel Committee or any other such committee to visit the Agencies. We can decide about our future ourselves in cooperation, of course, with the All-India Muslim League. Therefore, if the Patel Committee or any other Hindu Committee visits the Agencies, we warn that the consequences will be serious and the Government will be responsible for them'.

A third resolution, which like the earlier ones was unanimously passed, said: 'We strongly protest against the arrest of the Pir Sahib of Manki Sharif by the Congress Government of the N-WF Province. We deeply regret that the Governor should have allowed this, knowing fully well what the reaction and adverse effect it would have on the Pathans of the tribal territory. We urge upon the Governor-General-in-Council as well as the Governor of the N-WF Province to release him forthwith, failing which the Government will be responsible for the dreadful consequences.'

The next resolution, also unanimously approved, said, 'The Khan Ministry has lost the confidence of the Frontier people. Its misrule has resulted in the ever-increasing lawlessness and bloodshed prevailing in the Province. The Ministry, has miserably failed to run the administration of the Province. Its continuance any longer is a direct challenge and an insult to Pathan intelligence and this is already having its serious repercussions among the tribal people.'

Fresh Elections Demanded

'It is, therefore demanded that Khan Ministry should be immediately dissolved, Section 93 be promulgated and fresh elections be ordered forthwith'.

Lastly, the Jirga sternly warned that 'any step directed against the interests of the Agencies (by the Hindu Congress or the British Government) will be resisted with everything at our disposal'.

The representatives of the South Waziristan Agency who visited the Kurram Agency and held the Jirga with the leaders of the latter Agency included Captain Abdulla Khan, Malik Amir Khan, Col Shah Pasand, Malik Ata Mohammad, Malik Bakar and Jammatt Khan.



14. Political Situation in the Frontier

Minutes of the Fourth Miscellaneous Meeting of the Viceroy, 18 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 196A, NMML.

Those present at this meeting held at The Viceroy's House, New Delhi on 18 April 1947 at 11.30 a.m. were: Rear-Admiral Viscount Mountbatten of Burma, Sir O. Caroe (not present for first two paras of the record), Pandit Nehru, Dr Khan Sahib, Lord Ismay, Sir E. Mievill; Lieutenant-Colonel Erskine Crum (Secretariat).

THE SITUATION IN THE NWFP

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY opened the Meeting by thanking Pandit Nehru for the letter which he had sent him that morning. He went on to say that he had hoped to be able at the present time to give all his attention to efforts to find a solution for the future of India as a whole and to avoid details which only concerned individual Provinces. However, he felt that the situation in the NWFP was, if not dealt with now, likely to prejudice the wider problem. His immediate object, therefore, was to find a temporary expedient which would restore that situation and maintain peace until an over-all solution for the whole of India had been decided. He hoped that solution when found, would be acceptable to all parties, and would result in the prevention of bloodshed. From the latest reports it appeared that the situation at the Frontier was deteriorating both in those areas which were the direct responsibility of Dr Khan Sahib and in the tribal areas.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that Sir Olaf Caroe had explained to him that the main difficulty at the moment was that the Muslim League had started agitations which were gravely embarrassing the Government of the Province. In dealing with these agitations, the Government was gradually getting itself into a position, not by any means wholly intentionally, whereby most of the Opposition were in jail. He pointed out that it was very difficult to carry on constitutional government in such a state of affairs. In the United Kingdom during the war, only one member of Parliament had been imprisoned under the special Defence Regulation No. 18b. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that Sir Olaf Caroe was fully aware that he was considered by many to be pro-Muslim League but he had denied this in what had impressed him (His Excellency) as being a most sincere way. If the intention of the British had been to remain in India, it was conceivable that they might have tried for a 'divide and rule' policy. But as the British were going in June 1948—and his instructions on this point were inflexible—and as all were agreed that it was of the utmost importance to leave the country as peaceful as possible, it was not rationally conceivable that any Governor should violently take sides with one or other political party at this stage.

Sir Olaf Caroe then entered the room.

DR KHAN SAHIB complained that on many occasions Sir Olaf Caroe had not taken his advice.

SIR OLAF CAROE said that he had the greatest admiration for Dr Khan Sahib, whom he considered to be an outstanding and most courageous man. They had had many differences of opinion in the past for various reasons. He agreed that he had on occasions not accepted Dr Khan Sahib's advice—because to have done so would have made the position of his Ministry more difficult. As a specific point he had disagreed with Dr Khan Sahib over the

question of interference—though from the highest motives—by the Executive in the discretion of magistrates, particularly in their judicial functions.

PANDIT NEHRU said that he fully upheld the principle that there should be no such interference. DR KHAN SAHIB said that it was Sir Olaf Caroe who interferes with him. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he would be quite ready to send an independent judge to look into this question if both Sir Olaf Caroe and Dr Khan Sahib wished it.

SIR OLAF CAROE said that another matter on which he had not always taken Dr Khan Sahib's advice was that of the posting of officials. The reason for this was because he considered that much caution should be exercised before transferring officials just because there had been trouble in their districts.

DR KHAN SAHIB remarked that if he was to be trusted to run the Province, he should not be accused of favouritism.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that at the Governors' Conference two days previously, this question of posting had been discussed. The Governors had felt that there was a distinct tendency on the part of many Ministries to ask for the immediate transfer of officials whenever there was any trouble. In the Governors' unanimous opinion such impulsive transfers were likely to cause breakdown of the administration.

DR KHAN SAHIB interpolated the remark that many of his recommendations for transfer had been changed unilaterally by the Governor without him being consulted.

SIR OLAF CAROE denied this, saying that he always discussed appointments with Dr Khan Sahib and there was no question of varying them without consulting him. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY suggested that if in any case personal discussion between the two proved impossible, the Governor and the Prime Minister should exchange personal and confidential notes.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that it was a clear principle that Governors should not interfere with postings except when Ministries tried to transfer officials hurriedly after trouble. It was also an obvious principle that Ministries should avoid such actions.

DR KHAN SAHIB's next complaint was that Sir Olaf Caroe interfered too much with day-to-day work, saw many files before him, and thereby stultified his opinions. He stated that he had always seen the files before Sir George Cuninghame, when the latter had been Governor. SIR OLAF CAROE admitted that when he had first been appointed he had possibly, on occasions, expressed his own views too freely on files—but he said that that procedure had come to an end some time ago.

Then DR KHAN SAHIB said that Sir Olaf Caroe was wont to call conferences without inviting him. He quoted particular cases of this. SIR OLAF CAROE explained why this had been done. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that it was agreed in principle that this was an incorrect procedure.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY then said that he considered that the hour had come to cease recrimination. He asked Dr Khan Sahib what policy he would best like to follow.

DR KHAN SAHIB said that he believed that every outbreak of disorder should be treated at once and firmly. Leniency, in his view, only led to further outbreaks.

SIR OLAF CAROE said that this was surely a very large question—how far a popular Government could go in time of trouble to order the suppression of a movement which was directed against it. Whenever there had been serious violence he had had done his best in every possible way to assist his Ministry to enforce law and order. He had most helpful backing from Pandit Nehru, for which he was thankful, in dealing with tribal inroads. The question of whether or not to ban processions and demonstrations under Section 144 was a very difficult one. He had been trying to persuade his Ministry on the one hand to enforce law and order, and on the other hand so to act that a return to normal conditions would follow as soon as possible. In dealing with a procession which was getting out of hand, one could either use the police in lathi charges and perhaps tear gas, or one might bring in troops—which was likely to result in heavy loss of life. The Military had informed him that they considered that District Officers had, on the whole, particularly in Peshawar, dealt with crowds very well without calling troops in.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he was sure that Dr Khan Sahib would agree to the principle that it was wrong to call in a single soldier unnecessarily. DR KHAN SAHIB agreed.

SIR OLAF CAROE stated that, after troops had been called in to deal with the situation at Peshawar and had had to open fire, feeling had been aroused more than ever before and there had been a large number of assaults in the city that night. He had been unable on this occasion to consult Dr Khan Sahib so he had given orders that the city should be occupied by troops. The situation now was that the present administration was being held in position by the use of troops.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY asked Pandit Nehru whether he agreed that a popular Government should never have to be held in power by the use of troops if this was in any way avoidable. PANDIT NEHRU agreed thoroughly.

DR KHAN SAHIB then said that Sir Olaf Caroe imagined things. He also said that, if he were given a free hand, he would promise that there would be no rioting, no processions, no murders.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY then asked Dr Khan Sahib whether he could continue government if all troops were withdrawn. DR KHAN SAHIB said that indeed he could, provided that all officials were withdrawn also.

PANDIT NEHRU asked Dr Khan Sahib whether he was complaining against being restricted. DR KHAN SAHIB said that he was.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY asked Dr KHAN SAHIB what he would do if he had a completely free hand. DR KHAN SAHIB said that he would deal severely with anybody who broke the law.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY then told Dr Khan Sahib that it was widely held that the Pir of Manki had on many occasions publicly preached non-violence. DR KHAN SAHIB said that this was only true of the immediate past. Six months ago the Pir of Manki said that he would shoot the Governor if he were told to do so. DR KHAN SAHIB added his opinion that the Pir of Manki had been behind all the recent murder and looting.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he wanted now to start discussing positive action and a draft statement was handed round, which, it was suggested, should be issued by Sir Olaf Caroe after his return, announcing that elections would be held in the NWFP in due course. DR KHAN SAHIB said that he would be prepared for an election at any time. He would not stay in power for one moment longer than he was wanted. He was fully in favour of this principle. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY related that, when Mr Liaquat Ali Khan had suggested that the

Province should be put under Section 93 pending elections, Sir Olaf Caroe had declared himself quite ready that the present Ministry should continue in power until after the elections were held. He went on to say that the last thing that he wanted to do was, by trying to help, to make matters worse. The essential thing was to establish a truce in accordance with the appeal signed by Mr Gandhi and Mr Jinnah and to keep the Province quiet until the main decision was made. He was wondering what steps could be taken to stop the present disturbances. First it was, of course, desirable that the Muslim League should call off their direct action campaign—and that was surely what Mr Jinnah's signature on the appeal implied. Secondly, could the Government of the Province make any gesture? Might it perhaps be possible to issue a fresh statement saying that, as an act of clemency, all political offenders would be released on the condition they did not take advantage of the truce. If they did, they would be put back in jail. Perhaps processions might be prohibited—but not political meetings and the freedom of speech. He was not suggesting that those who had committed criminal acts should be released.

DR KHAN SAHIB agreed thoroughly with this line of action. He added that he did not think that any condition should be made in the release of political prisoners. PANDIT NEHRU also agreed that such a statement should be issued, and made suggestions as to the wording of it. SIR OLAF CAROE agreed that a statement on the lines suggested by the Viceroy would be helpful. He gave his view that the important thing was that processions must stop. He suggested that political leaders accused of violence should not be released and this was agreed. It was also agreed that those guilty of the technical crime of breaking the ban to take part in processions should be released.

There was then a short discussion of and agreement on a draft note to be issued to the Press concerning the results of this meeting.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY asked whether it was considered that it was very important not to arm the rival factions in the NWFP. DR KHAN SAHIB and PANDIT NEHRU agreed that it was.

SIR OLAF CAROE said that it was Dr Khan Sahib's policy to let everybody who was likely to vote for him have a gun. DR KHAN SAHIB said that this was not the case. He had been issuing permits for fire-arms recently, but solely for record purposes. Nevertheless, he felt that the villagers must have something to protect themselves with. The trouble was that the good villagers had no arms and the 'undesirables' had arms without licences. PANDIT NEHRU pointed out that there were and always had been a large number of guns on the Frontier.

PANDIT NEHRU said that the rough dividing line between Congress and Muslim League supporters in the NWFP was on class lines. Sir Olaf Caroe did not agree with this. He thought that the present division was largely a reproduction on the political stage of old factions.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that Dr Khan Sahib had been accused of holding up Press telegrams and SIR OLAF CAROE said that there had been some unwise censorship by the Government. DR KHAN SAHIB said that there had been only one case of censorship. He said that he would repeat the orders that had been issued that there should be none.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he would much like to visit the NWFP as soon as occasion permitted.

Dr Khan Sahib said that he would be very pleased if His Excellency would come; he felt sure that such a visit would be most helpful. SIR OLAF CAROE and PANDIT NEHRU agreed with this.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY:

- (i) invited C.V.S. to prepare a draft of the statement to be issued by the Government of the NWFP;
- (ii) approved the draft, suggested by C.V.S., of a note to be issued to the Press on the results of the Meeting.

15. 'Frontier Referendum Imminent: Congress Ministry Will Have a Fall from Which It Will Never Rise'

26 April 1947

Report from *Pakistan Times* as cited in *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 398–9.

PESHAWAR, April 24.—'The Frontier Congress Ministry is in office only for a week or two and a referendum is imminent,' declared Malik Firoz Khan Noon, former Executive Councillor, addressing a gathering of students at the Islamia College, Peshawar this afternoon.

'In these days of democratic rule,' Mr Noon continued, 'no Ministry can remain long in power by means of tear-gas, *lathi*-charge and dirty money which come from an organization, the most dangerous enemies of Islam and Indian Muslims. If the Frontier Muslims cannot see, I can read the writing on the wall. The Ministry will have a fall from which it will never rise. This sort of administration cannot be carried on very long.'

'Another election,' the Speaker added, 'is at your door when the Pathans will give a verdict in favour of Pakistan. Our demand is not fresh election but free election and that can only be done, when the present Congress Ministry goes away and Section 93 is established' [*sic* for imposed].

Giving reasons for the existing great gulf between Hindus and Muslims in India, Malik Firoz Khan Noon attributed it to the narrow-mindedness of Hindu leaders and capitalists. Had they been a little broad-minded and true statesmen, India would have been free long long ago.

'India can now be free even tomorrow,' Mr Noon added, 'provided Hindu leaders agree to the same sort of freedom for Muslims which they love for themselves. Hindu *Raj* will never be established over the head of Muslims. Pakistan must be established at all costs where Muslims can live as a free nation with their own religion, culture and tradition.'

Concluding Mr Noon paid tributes to Frontier League workers including the Pir of Manki Sharif and women workers.

Malik Firoz Khan Noon had lunch with the Governor at Government House today.

Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, Member for Communications in the Interim Government, visited Peshawar Central Jail this afternoon and had long discussions with Frontier Muslim League leaders, including the Pir of Manki Sharif.—API.

16. 'Frontier Ministry Will Never Submit to Unabashed Goondaism: Sardar Patel's Statement'

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 27 April 1947.

New Delhi, April 26.—Considerable importance is attached in political circles to two statements which Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel issued tonight, one, appealing to the Princes and their people to take their due and honourable share in the shaping of India's destiny by joining the Constituent Assembly and the other that the Frontier Ministry will not submit to rowdyism and goondaism....

In regard to the Frontier Province which the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten and Lady Mountbatten will visit on Tuesday, Sardar Patel refuted the suggestions of the imminent resignation of the Ministry or that there was a fresh election round the corner.

The following is the text of Sardar Patel's statement on the Frontier. 'It is to be regretted that some responsible League leaders have recently made statements hinting at the imminence of the resignation of the Frontier Premier. They are out to mislead the ignorant section of the people into the belief that a fall of the Frontier Ministry or a fresh election in the Frontier is round the corner and thereby afford a fillip to a movement which, under the cloak of the so-called demand for civil liberties, is virtually aimed at coercing the constant submission to illegal and improper designs of its sponsors.'

Pathan's Verdict

'Political memories are proverbially short. This is particularly the case when it is most embarrassing and inconvenient to recall past discomfitures and defeats. It was only a year ago that the League suffered a resounding defeat on the clear cut issue of Pakistan or Hindustan. Despite the obligation of all resources, both official and non official, against it, the verdict of the Pathan was unmistakably in favour of the latter.

'A comparatively small section of the people confined mostly to a few towns may take undue advantage of the spirit of toleration and contempt of violent methods but they cannot displace a popular ministry by unconstitutional methods. It is foolish to expect that what has been settled by ballot will be allowed to be unsettled by bullets or brute force and wishful thinking of irresponsible League leaders.

'Let not the people be deluded by these false statements into any sense of desperation as they are sure to meet with disappointment. The Frontier Ministry has assumed power as a result of popular mandate. No amount of back stair intrigues or threat of violence or mischievous propaganda can coerce it into abdicating its power, either in favour of unalloyed autocracy or unabashed rowdysim and goondaism.'...

17. Viceroy's Impressions: Need for Fresh Elections in NWFP

Note by Louis Mountbatten, 29 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 193, NMML.

Impressions gained from talks with 16 senior officers and officials of the Services in the NWFP on the 28th April 1947, at Peshawar.

Without exception everyone, both British and Indian, to whom I spoke was absolutely convinced that fresh elections at the earliest possible moment were absolutely necessary if a great disaster was to be avoided in the NWFP. They further went on to say that they considered it would be necessary to have section 93 government to ensure fair elections. Some considered this would be necessary for from four to six months, but all agreed that at a pinch two months would be enough, and some went so far as to say that even one month might do.

They pointed out that the black marketeering and the control of rationing and supplying of food and cloth had come into the hands of the Government supporters who could thus exercise unfair pressure on the voters.

The Government were also exercising unconstitutional pressure on the courts, and through the arms licensing. Quite apart from this, they said that if the present Government were in power the actual mechanism of the election would be unfairly worked.

Those who had seen the great Muslim League crowd which had collected at midday today (estimated variously to number between fifty and a hundred thousand) expressed their conviction that if I had not gone and shown myself on the bridge nothing would have been able to prevent the crowd from forcing their way through to Government House to see me, and that this inevitably would have meant troops having to open fire on the crowd, with a terrible loss of life.

General McCay went so far as to tell me at 11 p.m. that night that he considered his troops would still have been firing at that moment if I had not gone to the crowd when I did.

Several drew attention to the fact that it was unprecedented in their experience for such a meeting of Pathans to remain completely orderly, well-disciplined, and good humoured, and that the clapping and cheering with which I had been received was absolutely unknown to the Frontier.

18. Communal Undertones of the League Agitation

Record of Meeting between Louis Mountbatten and Representatives of the Hindu-Sikh Minorities Protection Board, 29 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 96A, NMML.

The deputation presented the memorial attached, and their spokesman, Rai Bahadur Dina Nath, pointed out that the agitation going on in the NW Frontier Province was mainly communal, and to only a lesser extent anti-Ministry. This was proved by the fact that no Muslim-Congressite had been harmed. He added that there was a general complaint that some members of the administrative services were not cooperating with the Government, and asked that there should be an increase in the non-Muslim element, especially the Police. He ended by stating that the minorities, who were only five per cent in the Province, were prepared to support any government which protected them, and safeguarded their economic, social and religious life.

2. HE thanked the deputation for this statement of their case and commended their attitude as both sensible and realistic. He agreed that it seemed the situation was communal, in the direct chain of causation from the Bengal and Bihar troubles.

3. HE then dealt seriatim with the points raised in the memorial. He stated, on the authority of the Governor, that as thorough an investigation as was possible in the circumstances was being made into all offences. This was affected by the fact that the police were working at stretch in coping with the immediate day-to-day Law and order position, and the Governor added that the public did not help to catch the criminals. Moreover, it was very difficult to get any proof when a murder was committed during the course of a procession.

4. The question of punishment of prisoners found guilty was one for the courts to decide.

5. The Governor stated that a large number of collective fines had been imposed in villages, probably more than in any other comparable area in India. The Governor did not believe in collective fines in towns, which he maintained only increased bitterness. HE entirely associated himself with this opinion, and the deputation agreed.

6. HE made it clear that more military forces were deployed in the NWFP than in any other such area in India. He said it was wrong in principle to use the army in place of the police in day to day work, by posting military pickets permanently inside cities, or in villages, as one of the deputation requested. The army should be used to support the police in case of trouble extending beyond their ability to cope with. The Governor added that troops were being used more than he had ever seen during his entire service in India.

7. On the matter of the impartiality of officials, HE pointed out that the Deputy Commissioner, D.I.K. was a Hindu who had been recommended for appointment there only two months ago by the Chief Minister. The Governor had given him every support for which the DC had only recently thanked him and yet D.I.K. had been the worst district.

8. The Governor pointed out that both political parties enjoy equal right of access to tribal areas, and that six months ago he had issued a circular enjoining this. At the same time, he disclaimed responsibility, on behalf of political officers, for any consequences which might ensue if propaganda parties of either side visited the tribes. There was thus full equality of treatment in regard to access to these places.

9. HE finally said that his endeavour was to remove the basic cause of communal strife rather than to deal with successive incidents. He was trying to get a decision as soon as possible on how to effect the transfer of power from British to Indian hands in such a way that everyone would accept it. If he could do so, that would remove the basic cause of the trouble, though he could not remove communal prejudice.

10. Rai Bahadur Dina Nath thanked HE for the patient and sympathetic hearing that he had accorded the delegation and said that the minority communities were realists, and wished to remain on in the NWF Province after the transfer of power. HE approved of their intention to reach a satisfactory accommodation in due course with the majority community and expressed sincere sympathy with their present plight.

I.D. Scott,
29-4-47

ENCLOSURE

His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India

Representation on Behalf of the Hindu and Sikh Public Bodies of North West Frontier Provinces

May it please Your Excellency!

We, the undersigned representatives of the leading Hindu and Sikh Public Bodies of Peshawar most respectfully beg to offer our heartiest welcome to Your Excellency and Lady Mountbatten on your first official visit to this ancient and historic city and submit the following lines by way of acquainting Your Excellency with the real situation in the North West Frontier Province, as affecting the Hindus and Sikhs vitally.

As a sequel to the Direct Action Campaign launched by the Muslim League in Calcutta last year, and its aftermath, the Muslim League leaders of this Province have been carrying on a most virulent type of communal propaganda against the Hindus and Sikhs, with the result that woeful incidents of murders, murderous assaults, forcible conversions, arson and loot, involving tremendous loss of life and property, and acute physical and mental agony to the innocent victims, the Hindus and Sikhs, have taken place at different places in the Province since 1st October, 1946. According to conservative estimates the number of Hindus and Sikhs murdered is about 500, of those stabbed and wounded about 150, and of those forcibly converted about 400. Nearly fifty places of worship have been burnt, as also 1500 houses and shops. The property of Hindus and Sikhs worth crores of rupees has been burnt, looted and destroyed.

The Hindu and Sikh residents of the Province feel that if the communal propaganda carried on by the Muslim Leaguers is not effectively checked by the Government, more tremendous loss of life and property is seriously apprehended. Already a large number of Hindus and Sikhs

have left the Province owing to a feeling of extreme insecurity under the present conditions created by the Muslim League's communal agitation. This continuing exodus of minorities is fraught with disastrous consequences.

Since 10th March, 1947, normal life and trade in Peshawar have been almost paralysed. For ten days at a stretch all Hindu and Sikh residents of Peshawar remained confined to their houses for fear of being stabbed, shot or murdered by the Muslim Leaguers, in spite of the Ministry's solicitude to help them.

The Hindus and Sikhs have full confidence in the present Ministry which has been doing its utmost to give them protection but it is an open secret that a preponderating element in the services does not cooperate with the Ministry in carrying out its policy effectively. It is a patent though extremely deplorable fact that very few culprits who inflict loss of life and property on the Hindus and Sikhs, are apprehended and brought to book. On the other hand, when a Hindu or Sikh exercises his right of private self-defence against heavy odds, he is at once proceeded against with a vengeance.

The present agitation carried on by the Leaguers is in fact not anti-Ministry, but anti-Hindu and Sikh. The present Ministry is in office on account of the confidence that it enjoys of the majority of Muslim members in the Legislature. Even if the eleven Hindu and Sikh members of the Legislature were to withdraw their support, the Ministry would continue in office, as it would still have the confidence of 21 Muslim members against 16 Muslim League members, in the Legislature. The very fact that not a single act of violence has been committed on any Muslim supporter of the Ministry, shows that the whole agitation is in fact anti-Hindu and Sikh, though it has been shown in the false grab of anti-Ministry agitation.

The free access to the Tribal Territory enjoyed by the Muslim League leaders and workers during the past ten months, and the communal propaganda carried on by them there, against the Hindus and Sikhs, have resulted in the recent tragic happenings in the district of Dera Ismail Khan. Unless immediate and effective steps are taken to put a check on the activities of the Muslim Leaguers in the Tribal Territory, a repetition of the grave happenings in D.I. Khan district, is feared in other parts of the Province. That in view of the facts herein above submitted, Your Excellency's memorialists pray that in order to restore confidence and to attain normal and peaceful conditions in this province, the following measures may kindly be taken:

- (a) Thorough investigation of all offences affecting life and property by impartial officers of approved integrity.
- (b) Condign [*sic*] punishment to persons who may be found guilty.
- (c) Imposition of collective fines in areas wherein murders, arson, and loot have taken place and miscreants cannot be traced.
- (d) Arrangements for adequate military forces to be placed at the disposal of the Civil Authorities for quelling disturbances and keeping order.
- (e) Posting of such impartial District and Police Officers as may command the confidence of the minorities.

We beg to remain,
Your Excellency's most obedient and respectful memorialists:

Peshawar
April 28, 1947

1. for Provincial Hindu Sikh Minority Protection Board, Peshawar.
2. for Hindu Sabha, Peshawar.
3. for Aman Sabha, Peshawar.
4. for Arya Samaj, Pampura, Peshawar.
5. for Arya Samaj, Asiya, Peshawar.
6. for Goshala Committee, Peshawar.
7. for Hindu Sewa Sang, Peshawar.
8. for Pajtirath Sudhar Sabha, Peshawar.
9. for Andarshehr Sudhar Sabha, Peshawar.
10. for Bar Association (Hindu Section), Peshawar.
11. for Khukhrain Sabha, Andarshehr, Peshawar.
12. for Piece goods Merchants Association, Peshawar.
13. for Jewellers Association, Peshawar.
14. for Guru Singh Sabha, Peshawar.
15. for Gurudwara Bhai Biba Singh, Peshawar.
16. for Gurudwara Bhai Joga Singh, Peshawar.
17. for Brahmin Sabha, Peshawar.
18. for Shri Hari Kirtan Mandal, Peshawar.
19. for National High School, Peshawar City.
20. for Arya Girls' School, Peshawar City.
21. for Arya Samaj (Gurukul Section), Peshawar City.
22. for Shri Sanatan Dharam Sabha, Peshawar.
23. for Dry Fruit Association, Peshawar.
24. for Piece goods Brokers' Association, Peshawar.
25. for Narinjan Singh Khalsa High School, Peshawar.
26. for Khalsa Girls' High School, Karimpura, Peshawar.
27. for L. Gurditta Mal Trust School, Rampura, Peshawar.
28. for Santanic Sikh Committee, Karimpura, Peshawar.
29. for Managing Committee R.B.S. Kanahi Nand Sanatan Dharam High School, Peshawar.
30. for Khalsa Youngmen Association, Peshawar.
31. for Bhai Joga Singh Khalsa Girls' High School, Asiya, Peshawar.
32. for Gurudwara Singh Sabha, Peshawar Cantt.
33. for Khalsa High School, Peshawar Cantt.
34. for Mahila Vidyala, Rampura, Peshawar.
35. for Gurbhai Committee Raja Sir Gurbaksh Singh Bedi, Peshawar.
36. for Managing Committee Dharamsala Baba Siri Sahib Bedi, Peshawar City.

19. 'Heavy Losses to Hindus and Sikhs in the Disturbances in Frontier Province: Forcible Religious Conversion and Large Scale Arson.'¹

Extract from a Report from *Hindustan*, 30 April 1947.

Finance Minister of the Frontier Shri Mehr Chand Khanna told the reporters in Peshawar that in the course of the Muslim League agitation since December, 400 Sikhs and Hindus were killed, 150 injured due to stabbing, more than 300 were forcibly converted to Islam, 50 persons were shot and 50 religious places of Hindus and Sikhs and 1600 houses and shops torched.

The most surprising thing is that in Dera Ismail Khan Jail one person was forcibly converted. In the violence in Haripura Central Jail, Inspector General was beaten. ...

¹ This is a translation of the original report in Hindi entitled 'Seemaprant ke Updravon Mein Hinduon tatha Sikhon ko Bhari Shati: Balaat Dharma-Parivartan Va Vyapak Agni-Kand'.

20. Decisions regarding NWFP Elections

Extract from the Record of an Interview between Louis Mountbatten, M.A. Jinnah, and Liaquat Ali Khan, 2 May 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 193, NMML.

HIS EXCELLENCY started by thanking Mr Jinnah for arranging for the Muslims to come and see him during his recent visit to the NWFP, and also congratulated him on the behaviour of the huge crowd of Muslims who had gathered in Cunningham Park. His Excellency said that after consulting Dr Khan Sahib he showed himself to the crowd who gave him a great reception and then dispersed without any trouble. His Excellency said that he could not too strongly put to Mr Jinnah that the latter's object was to obtain fresh elections to the NWFP before the transfer of power. Lord Ismay had left for England that morning to explain the plan for the transfer of power to HMG and included in it, as Mr Jinnah knew as he had actually read the plan, was a clause to the effect that fresh elections in the NWFP would be held. He must repeat that if violence were to continue in the province, that paragraph referring to the elections would be amended. He felt strongly that Mr Jinnah obviously would want to get the NWFP into Pakistan, and that everything therefore was to be gained by Mr Jinnah quietly calling off the movement without any announcement. His Excellency further said that, in his view, there was a clear case for fresh elections, but that in no circumstances would he yield to violence.

MR JINNAH said that he was sorry but he felt that there was some misunderstanding. He had clearly understood that an announcement about a fresh election was not to be held up until the plan was made public, which he understood would not be at any rate until the end of the month, and it would be impossible for him to control the situation for so long. He said that he had carried out what he told His Excellency he would before the latter's visit. There was no procession; the meeting was peaceful; and those Muslims in gaol came and had an interview with the Viceroy, and now, he said, 'the position is that you ask me to tell my followers not to carry on with the agitation'. What could he say in reply? HIS EXCELLENCY said that he could refer to the Gandhi/Jinnah appeal, that he could say that he had seen the Viceroy who was adamant that he would not give way to duress, and that the obvious thing to do was to wait for the plan. MR JINNAH agreed that it was quite wrong to give way to force and that violence must be stopped, but that His Excellency could not control the people nor could he. He could not understand that the question of dissolution had to be delayed until after the plan was made public. HIS EXCELLENCY replied that his conscience would not allow him to yield to force in any way, and he was in great trouble with the Congress over the attitude he was taking up regarding the NWFP. He did not mind that. To Jinnah's definite question 'as a result of your visit to the Frontier Province are you satisfied there is a case for immediate dissolution of the Government', His Excellency gave a categorical denial 'No, definitely no; any election will take place solely on the issue of Pakistan or Hindustan.' The election was merely to find out whether the province should go to Pakistan or Hindustan, that it might be necessary for the fair

conduct of the election to go into Section 93, and that observers for the Muslim League and Congress might have to be appointed. MR JINNAH said that if the Khan Sahib administration was allowed to continue, the Congress would provoke conditions that would cause violence and that if he were to call off the campaign he would be reduced to dust in the eyes of his followers. He could say that the campaign must be peaceful, but he had no hesitation in saying that it would not remain peaceful.

At this moment, Mr Liaquat Ali Khan joined the meeting. HIS EXCELLENCY then told Mr Liaquat of the general tenor of the conversation. Mr Liaquat said that he saw no chance of the movement being called off. If the Muslim League had called it off immediately after His Excellency's visit, it would be said that the League was under British orders and that Mr Jinnah counted for nothing. This was a point which HIS EXCELLENCY said had not occurred to him before and one that carried weight with him.

HIS EXCELLENCY then suggested that the League would be well advised:

- (1) to insist on their leaders in the Provinces leaving the gaols. He pointed out that some of the best brains in the League Party were in prison and were perfectly free to come out but would not do so as they felt that they were embarrassing the administration more by remaining in.
- (2) that Mr Jinnah should send for the League leaders here and, whilst not insisting on their calling the movement off, should suggest that they should keep it alive by holding meetings in out of the way places, and not too big meetings at that; that processions and picketing should be barred; and that incidents should be prevented which have news value and are published in all the newspapers.

Mr Jinnah said once again that so long as the present Ministry was in power he saw no hope. It all sounded all right on paper but in practice it just would not work. HIS EXCELLENCY replied that he feared that the answer to that was that it would be necessary for him to send in troops and aeroplanes which he would be forced to do if the League were determined to make trouble. MR JINNAH said that the Congress knew perfectly well that they were finished in the NWFP. They were playing the game of the last gambler's throw. Their whole idea was to keep up the quarrel and bloodshed and to force the hands of the Viceroy to say that under those circumstances he could not have an election. He said that the representatives for the NWFP were arriving tonight and he frankly did not quite know what he could say to them, but it was finally left that if Mr Jinnah wished to come and see His Excellency again and proposed to bring the leaders with him, he would communicate with me, and the Viceroy promised that he would receive them....

21. Nehru's Disagreement on NWFP Elections

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten, 3 May 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 326-8.

NEW DELHI,

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

With your letter, dated 30th April, you sent me various papers relating to your visit to the Frontier. Among these was an account of your meeting with the Governor of the NWFP and the four Ministers on the 28th April.

On reading through all these papers I was considerably surprised both at some statements of fact and at the general approach to various problems. I wrote to you a brief letter expressing my distress. There was much in those papers to which I wanted to draw your attention. But I refrained from doing so, because, as I pointed out in my letter of the 1st May, the basic question was one of approach. I should like to make it quite clear that I do not agree with several things that have been said in the course of the various interviews and the fact that I am not drawing particular attention to each matter should not be taken to mean that I agree with it.

This morning I had a trunk telephone call from Dr Khan Sahib, the Chief Minister of the NWFP. He told me that he had received the report of the meeting you had with the Ministers. He added that so far as paragraphs 15, 16 and 17 were concerned, there was obviously a grave misapprehension and they did not correctly represent what he or his colleagues had agreed to. It was not possible for me to go into any detail on the telephone, but I understood that he had sent a note on the subject to the Governor with the request that this may be forwarded to you.

I need hardly repeat that this matter of the Frontier Province is not only important in it self but has far-reaching implications in the all-India context. Any special treatment of the Frontier Province in regard to elections, or the imposition of Section 93 Government would create a very grave situation. I have already written to you about the Congress Working Committee's reactions to such a proposal. I am personally convinced that those reactions are correct.

It is unfortunate that there should have been a misunderstanding in regard to what was said at your meeting with the Ministers. Sometimes wrong impressions are formed for lack of preciseness in language. It is desirable, above all, that there should be no misunderstanding of respective view-points. In this matter the Frontier Province Ministry is concerned, of course; but all of us are equally concerned, because of the wider implications involved. I trust, therefore, that nothing will be taken for granted and if there is any misapprehension it should be removed immediately.

In the course of our conversations I think I mentioned to you the result of a by-election in the Frontier, which was held about two months or so ago. I am sorry I gave you perhaps a slightly wrong impression. I have now enquired into this matter and the correct figures are as follows:

In the 1946 general election the Muslim League candidate won the seat at Mardan. The voting was as follows:

Muslim League	8354
Congress	8185
Muslim League majority	169

In the 1947 election the voting was as follows:

Muslim League	8941
Congress	8353
Muslim League majority	588

There was thus no change, though there was a slight increase in the Muslim League majority from 169 to 588. The total voting went up from 16539 to 17294. Both the candidates increased their poll, though the increase on the Muslim League side was somewhat greater. On the whole, it might be said that there was no marked change.

Yours sincerely,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

22. 'No Elections in NWFP'

The Tribune, 3 May 1947.

New Delhi, May 2.—The Congress Working Committee at its session today it is understood, further considered the situation in the NWFP with particular reference to the reported desire of the authorities to hold fresh elections in the province. The committee is believed to have addressed a letter to the Viceroy opposing the holding of any general elections now and stressing that the first concern of the government should be to restore law and order. It is believed the committee's opposition to the holding of elections was mainly due to the fact that elections held in the province only last year resulted in the success of the present ministry. The committee is understood to have been of the opinion that elections should not be held in response to disorders engineered for upsetting a government and the interest taken by certain highly placed authorities in favour of an election would be construed as a partisan attitude.

In this connection Congress quarters pointed out that the Muslim League was for liquidating the present ministry or alternatively have a fresh election.—API

23. 'Section 93 Cannot Be Applied in Frontier'

The Hindustan Times, 4 May 1947.

'It is foolish to expect that Section 93 could be applied in the NWFP, where the Ministry has the solid support of a good majority of the legislators', said Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in a statement on Saturday.

Sardar Patel said: 'The efforts to dislodge the Frontier Ministry by violent means continue unabated despite Mr Jinnah's so-called peace appeal and the Viceregal visit to the Frontier in quest of a rapprochement. The Frontier Premier's gesture in offering to release the League prisoners made in response to this appeal, has evoked no response from the prisoners; on the other hand the forces of disorder have received encouragement'.

'Mr Jinnah's peace appeal is either completely ignored or not taken seriously by his followers and yet there is no condemnation from him of acts of violence perpetrated by them. Systematic pressure tactics in true Hitlerian style and with all its fury and characteristics are being employed in support of their illegal designs'.

'The latest to take the field is a concerted propaganda decision in favour of a proclamation under Section 93 in the Frontier as a result of this visit. The talk of application of Section 93 in the Frontier is to betray ignorance of the elementary conditions of that province. A resort to Section 93 when a duly elected legislature is functioning with a Government commanding majority not only of the Muslim members but also of the minorities would be a gross act of betrayal and highhandedness and an outrage on the constitution. Even when a few months ago the constitution broke down in Sind owing to the Ministry's failure to secure the requisite majority the Ministry was not removed. It is foolish to expect that Section 93 could be applied in the Frontier where the ministry has the solid support of a good majority of the legislators. This propaganda about the application of Section 93 may help in keeping alive the unlawful and violent agitation for a little while longer but it cannot affect the stability of the Ministry'.—API



24. 'Recall and Dismissal of Sir Olaf Caroe Demanded'

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 5 May 1947.

New Delhi, May 4.—Acharya Jugal Kishore, General Secretary of the Congress, and Dewan Chamanlal have issued a statement on the Frontier province in which they state that 'a Governor should be appointed in place of Sir Olaf Caroe who should be prepared to guarantee protection to the minorities in full sympathy and harmony with the present Ministry and that it is not the Ministry that should be dismissed but the Governor and the officials who look to him for support'.

The Congress leaders had gone to survey the Frontier situation and make a first hand report to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at his request. Following is the text of the statement: 'We have recently returned from a tour of the Frontier Province and what we have seen of the destruction and violence committed against the persons and property of innocent men, women and children has shocked us beyond measure. There is no doubt that the adherents of the Muslim League have utilized these atrocious methods with the primary object of making it impossible for the Ministry to function, nor have we any doubt that what we may call the Governor's party has given direct or indirect encouragement to the law breakers...'.

'One of the spokesmen of the League is pleased to describe such horrible and premeditated atrocities as evidence of a "spirit of anger and discontent prevailing in the Frontier Province". Not one word of condemnation or regret or horror has fallen from the lips of this gentleman, but instead he calls for a referendum, thinking possibly that by such acts of brutal coercion and intimidation a reversal can be obtained of the recent crushing defeat suffered by his party in the provincial election.

'The Frontier Ministry is unshakable. It has the support not only of the minorities to a man but also of an imposing majority of the elected legislators representing the Frontier Pathans. All wishful thinking on the part of inspired agitators, wanting fresh elections or a Section 93 Government is utter nonsense and balderdash. No Ministry is as secure in popular support today as the Ministry headed by Dr Khan Sahib and it would survive terrorism, brutality, coercion and even the present Governor of the North West Frontier Province.

'It is an open secret that the present Governor does not favour the Ministry. A man in his position who is also the head of the Political Department, can seriously hamper the work of the Ministry since a large number of administrative officers play a dual role being civilian administrators as well as Political Agents. Special responsibility rests upon the Governor for the protection of the minorities and yet attempt made by well meaning administrators and the Ministry to protect the minorities have been frustrated. Representatives of the minorities met us and told us that they had complete confidence in the Red Shirts and yet a scheme for the provision of Home Guards has been unnecessarily held up by the Governor—thus robbing the minorities of confidence in his impartiality.

'The happenings at Dera Ismail Khan were an eye-opener to us. The League agitation had practically fizzled out and it became difficult to find more than four persons to offer themselves for arrest, although on previous occasions the figures had been very high. It was obvious that the back of the agitation had been broken and all was peaceful.

'In this situation secret meetings were held, people imported from the Punjab and other areas and definite information was conveyed to the authorities of the impending disaster. As it was known that the so-called civil disobedience movement having failed, resort would be had to violence, repeated orders were issued by the head of civilian administration for the

arrest of the ring leaders and repeatedly these orders were disobeyed by the police officials. Indeed, even the orders of the Inspector General of Police under the instruction of ministry were flouted. The flouting of these orders resulted in the agitators resorting to violence with impunity and on the 15th of April, the first incident that took place was the burning of a shop right opposite the police station at Dera Ismail Khan....

'The Governor of the Province was fully aware of the orders given for the arrest of the ring leaders and yet when he arrived, he asked one of the most prominent of the ring leaders to accompany him and openly fraternised with this person. Quite naturally the officials who had disobeyed the orders given to them had done so knowing perfectly well that they would not be questioned or called to order. The city of Dera Ismail Khan could have been saved and all the disaster that had come upon that city and the surrounding areas could have been avoided. But in this unnatural state of affairs when officials displayed a dual loyalty, disaster was inevitable. This unnatural state of affairs must cease immediately and a Governor should be appointed in the place of Sir Olaf Caroe who is prepared to guarantee protection to the minorities in full sympathy and harmony with the present ministry which is headed by a unique and superb personality, Dr Khan Sahib.'

25. NWFP People Must Be Given a Chance to Express Opinion

Statement by M.A. Jinnah, 7 May 1947

TOP, Vol. X, pp. 689-91.

I have had the opportunity of discussing with Frontier League leaders the situation in the NWFP and the developments that have taken place recently. The League movement in the Frontier was started because the people, and especially the Muslim Leaguers and the League Organization in the Province, were sought to be crushed by the Khan Sahib Ministry by fair means or foul ever since the Ministry was formed. The victimization, persecutions, suppression and oppression on the part of the Government knew no limits. Every vestige of civil liberties had ceased to exist. Ordinances, Frontier crime regulations, Section 144 and other repressive provisions of the law were being freely and ruthlessly used to deprive the people of their rights of political expression and criticism of the Ministry. These were the conditions prevailing in the Province when the top ranking leaders of the Muslim League were arrested for asserting their rights of civil liberties, and the resentment caused among the people assumed the character of mass civil disobedience. It is absolutely false, and a complete misrepresentation of the facts, that the All India Muslim League ever decided to resort to direct action.

2. The Bombay resolution of the 29th July, 1946, he continued, merely indicated a change of policy. By it we declared that we would no longer be restricted to constitutional methods which had been scrupulously followed by the All Muslim League up to that time. The Congress creed, on the other hand, not only permitted them to resort to unlawful means, but it was the very essence of the organization, and they were free to resort to mass civil disobedience at any time they considered proper for the achievement of their objectives through coercive methods. This 'Sword of Damocles', he said, was kept continually hanging over the Muslims and the British Government, and the Congress has repeatedly launched movements and used the weapons of mass civil disobedience since 1921 on various occasions, creating grave situations in the country. The last time they decided to launch the movement was in 1942, and we all know with what disastrous consequences. The attitude of the Congress towards perpetrators

of acts of violence in connection with movements launched by it is evident from what the Congress Ministries have been doing since their return to power. In their Provinces acts of violence committed during the 1942 movement have been hailed by the Congress leaders as acts of heroism and patriotism.

3. As against this policy and record of the Congress the Muslim League, by its resolution of the 29th July, only made it clear that it was now free to launch a movement of mass civil disobedience as and when it was thought necessary. It was in this sense that the phrase 'direct action' was used. It is quite obvious that the meaning of 'direct action' which is attributed to us maliciously, namely that it is based on the principle of force, violence and bloodshed, is without any foundation and is absolutely untrue. 'Direct action' means social pressure, strike or revolt, constituting moral pressure upon the authority in power to redress our grievances and meet our demands.

4. The present movement in the North-West Frontier Province developed because the situation had become intolerable, and the Ministry could not be allowed to continue its ruthless policy of crushing the Muslims and the Muslim League Organization. The entire public has lost its confidence in this Ministry and there is Province-wide demand for the application of Section 93, and fresh elections. Dr Khan Sahib and his co-Ministers were challenged to seek the verdict of the people, which they, in their extreme obstinacy, still refuse to do. From all the information that is available to me and I have gone through this matter most carefully, I cannot disagree with the facts as they exist, and as a result of the situation created by the Frontier Ministry thousands of the people have been arrested, sentenced to various terms of imprisonment and detained and clapped into jails under the Frontier Crime Regulations. The only honourable course for Dr Khan Sahib and his co-Ministers is to resign and seek fresh election.

5. I note that the Frontier Government subsequently issued a communiqué on the 19th April in which *inter alia* they said 'The Government have, for their part, decided unconditionally to release, as soon as conditions permit, all political prisoners who are not charged with offences of violence; and the Government have no intention of interfering with the freedom of expression of political opinion or with peaceful meetings, but they must impress on all in the Province that processions and picketing have in the past proved an incitement to acts of lawlessness, and that they cannot be permitted until normal conditions return'. But the root cause still remains. I had hoped that better counsels would prevail and I do still hope that the situation will be examined dispassionately, and in its true perspective, by those concerned.

6. The Provincial Muslim League, he continued, has on the 1st May (before the Frontier leaders came to Delhi to meet me), after full consideration, come to the conclusion that the steps so far proposed by the Frontier Government in no way met the demands of the Muslim League, and were, therefore, not acceptable to the League. They, therefore, decided not to call off the movement. The Frontier leaders could not also agree to their being released, for they had not gone to the jails merely to be released. I sympathize with them and I am unable to disagree with them in the decisions that they have taken.

7. Nevertheless, we must recognize that the question of the Frontier, in all its aspects, is now before His Majesty's Government, and Lord Ismay is in the UK now, and, in my opinion, it is a question of a few weeks when decisions concerning the whole of India are likely to be announced. It is quite obvious that the people of the NWFP must be given a chance to express their verdict, and the root cause of popular resentment must be eliminated. There is not the

slightest doubt what the verdict will be, and the present Ministry cannot possibly thereafter continue. Therefore, as I have always said, let us hope for the best and be prepared for the worst.

8. In these circumstances I most earnestly appeal to every Muslim, especially the Leaguer, to do all in their power to remain peaceful. Without any reservation I say that on our side there should be no resort to violence or force, and we must bear up with fortitude and show tolerance, despite the gravest provocations. We should not depart from the strictly peaceful path which we are determined to follow. In no circumstances, he continued, should the Movement be allowed to take a communal turn. Our fight is not against the Hindus or Sikhs. We are fighting for a true verdict of the people of the Province, to be obtained by fair and free methods. It is against all canons of morality and civilization, and the teachings of Islam, that we should harm the weak. On the contrary it is the duty of every Muslim to protect the minorities, in spite of whatever provocation there may be. I know it can be said that it takes two to keep peace, but on our side I say keep peace at any cost, and to the other side I may say 'don't provoke and keep peace'. I pray to God that during the few weeks that are now ahead of us, pending the final announcement, both sides will do their best and save people from destruction of life and property. When the final announcement has been made it will be entirely for us, and we will be free to decide as to what course of action we should adopt'.

26. League Movement in the Frontier Loses Track

Press Statement Issued by Ashutosh Lahiry, 8 May 1947
AIHM Papers, File No. C-165, NMML.

The statement issued by Mr Jinnah is a laboured defence of the indefensible movement of civil disobedience being carried on by his followers in the North Frontier Province and is indeed an amazing piece of effrontery. It is most deplorable that Mr Jinnah should have, at this juncture, lent the League Civil Disobedience movement of the Frontier Province the weight of his public support, when the paramount need of the moment was to discourage forces of disorder and lawlessness in the province. His present statement will only strengthen the lawless element, in spite of his call to his followers to remain peaceful. It is clear that Mr Jinnah succumbed to the pressure of the young enthusiasts of the League headed by the Fakir of Manki.

It is entirely contrary to facts to say that the League movement was started, because the people were ruthlessly deprived of their rights of political expression or criticism of the ministry. The movement was started with the definite political objective of ousting the Congress ministry from power, whatever might have been its ostensible purpose. It is well-known that the deprivations of civil liberties in the Frontier Province did not precede but followed the launching of the Civil Disobedience movement by the League. As a matter of fact, the Khan Sahib ministry had been guilty of excessive leniency to the leaders of the Moslem League including the Fakir of Manki who were allowed to carry on amongst the fanatical Pathans a reckless campaign of hatred and violence for several months and propagate intense communal bitterness amongst the ignorant masses. Torn pages from the Koran as well as human bones were conspicuously displayed in every meeting to prove how in Bihar Islam had been humiliated and Moslems have been done to death. Such reckless campaign had its inevitable effect and the Hazara outrages were the direct outcome of this insensate propaganda. Did Mr Jinnah ever condemn these outrages in which the minority community alone suffered at the hands

of the majority community. Had the Khan Sahib ministry taken steps to restrain in time this organized campaign of incitement to violence, Hazara tragedy could not have been enacted, nor could have the forces of disorder and lawlessness gained the strength and intensity which these have reached today.

The ministry is now paying dearly for its shortsighted policy and its over anxiety to placate to the insatiable lust of the Moslem League. From a study of the sequence of events in the North West Frontier Province it will be found that Mr Jinnah's charge that the League was compelled to launch the civil disobedience movement in vindication of civil liberties is entirely baseless.

Mr Jinnah's attempts to defend the Frontier movement on an analogy with the Congress Civil Disobedience movements are equally futile. The Congress movement had been carried on strictly on non-violent lines and Gandhiji had called off the movement whenever he found indications of any deviation from the strict path of non-violence. The 1942 movement was an exception and has been repudiated by Gandhiji. The Congress leaders had no opportunity to inaugurate or to lead the movement which, owing to the folly of the Government, degenerated into a mass movement of violence, quite contrary to the tradition and technique of the Gandhi movement. To compare Congress Civil Disobedience movements with the League movement of Civil Disobedience is indeed a travesty of facts and is to do violence, to truth and reason.

Mr Jinnah, curiously enough, has sought, at this belated hour, to emphasize the peaceful nature of the Direct Action movement of the League while the march of events during the last eight months has left no room for mistaking the real intentions of this League movement. Since the formation of the League Council of Action, the country has been flooded with speeches, statements, and messages from responsible Moslem League Leaders such as Mr Nazimuddin, Sir Feroze Khan Noon, Mr Suhrawardy and Sir Ghazanfar Ali Khan and others with the evident object of preparing the Moslem mass mind for violence. I need not refer in detail to these speeches they are so fresh in public mind. In fact a campaign of direct incitement to violence has been the consistent policy of all the responsible League leaders including Mr Jinnah himself. Even the other day Mr Jinnah, in course of a statement threatened that if Pakistan were not accepted, the only other alternative would be 'Catastrophe' in the country.

These speeches and statements have not remained mere empty utterances but have been followed by actual deeds of violence and brutality from one end of the country to the other. The opening campaign of the Direct Action Day on the 16th August led to frightful atrocities in Calcutta; and Noakhali, Lahore and Rawalpindi, followed in quick succession. And now the Frontier Districts have been the scene of persistent outrages compelling the major portion of the Hindus and Sikh population to evacuate the province. In the face of such overwhelming evidence of calculated and organized violence in the interest of the Moslem League, Mr Jinnah's assertion about the peaceful intentions of his Direct Action movement is indeed a cruel mockery.

Mr Jinnah knows too well what loss and sufferings the Civil Disobedience movement of the League has caused the Hindus in the North West Frontier Provinces. At least one thousand Hindus have been murdered in Peshawar, Hazara, Kohat and Dera Ismail Khan districts alone during the last two months—not to speak of systematic looting and burning of thousands of Hindu families. To call this Civil Disobedience, a peaceful movement to bring moral pressure to bear upon the authority in power, as Mr Jinnah has done, is a most blatant untruth.

If Mr Jinnah's concluding appeal for peace to his followers had been genuine, he would have called off or withdrawn his support to the Frontier movement which has resulted in such

widespread killing and spoliation of one community alone. Whatever he might say the Frontier movement is inescapably aimed against the minority community. If a tree is known by its fruits, the frank violence of the League movement is a stark and unchallengeable fact. Why does not Mr Jinnah follow Gandhiji's example and cry a halt to the orgies of loot, arson and murder and demonstrate, by concrete action, his genuine anxiety for the peaceful character of his Direct Action movement: As it is, his present statement is intended to whitewash the misdeeds of his followers in the Frontier Province.

I have no doubt that in spite of his peace appeal Mr Jinnah's failure to condemn the crimes hitherto committed by the Frontier men against the minority community, and his support to the Civil Disobedience movement with the full knowledge of its essentially violence [*sic*] character will serve as a distinct encouragement to the League fanatics.

27. 'Agitation Will Bring League's End in Frontier: Dr Khan Sahib'

National Herald, 9 May 1947.

Peshawar, May 8.—Dr Khan Sahib Premier of NWFP, at a press conference today declared that the Pathans would not tolerate if anything was forced on them unjustly.

He said he was surprised that any Indian, whoever he might be, could suggest section 93 rule for NWFP, 'which we have removed once before and which we shall never allow in this province'.

'As far as the will of the people is concerned,' Dr Khan Sahib continued, 'a plebiscite after the departure of the British will show what the Pathans want. The plebiscite should be an honest vote of the people of the province without being interfered with or influenced by those who have always been deceiving the Pathans'.

The Frontier Premier asserted: 'The fight in NWFP is between the poor and the vested interests. The League agitation here has nothing to do with political agitation in the rest of India'.

A few women running about in processions and paid volunteers from tribal areas and the Punjab could never impress the Pathans who knew what their duty was and who were carefully watching the arrival of freedom, he added.

Dr Khan Sahib sympathized with 'friends of Mr Churchill' because the previous imperialist regimes gave them support, which in a democratic country, they could never hope to get. 'In a way, I am glad,' Dr Khan Sahib said, 'that they are not stopping their agitation because that will bring about their end in the Frontier Province and that will disillusion them. They must remember that they can never be saved by imperialist bayonets from hungry crowds whom they have provoked now and on whose labours they have always lived'.

28. '120 Red Shirts Join League: Bomb Explosion in Kohat: 123 Volunteers Arrested'

Dawn, 9 May 1947.

Peshawar, Tuesday.—Despite Khan Ministry's repression in the NWF Province, the League movement is proceeding with an ever increasing tempo. Veiled women are in the vanguard of the Pathans' fight for the restoration of people's civil liberties. Big processions and mammoth meetings on the one hand and peaceful picketing of courts and courting of arrest in large

numbers, on the other, have become the daily feature. Even the Khudai Khidmatgars are not left untouched by the Khanna-Khan Ministry's desperate tactics in crushing their brother Pathans' freedom movement and there are reports that the Red Shirts are daily joining the Muslim League in considerable numbers.

Yesterday 120 Red Shirts, including their commander, joined Muslim League. In Peshawar, League volunteers picketed the Judicial Commissioner's Court, in the course of which 28 of them were arrested.

The Zenana Muslim League took out the usual procession from Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan's residence, which marching through the city bazaars and the Pakistan Chowk and raising anti-Ministry and League slogans reached Gorkhaki Tehsils where the crescent spangled green flag was planted.

At 5 p.m., a huge procession led by Agha Khan Badshah Kalandari was taken out from the City League Office in defiance of Section 144 CrPC, enforced in Peshawar.

When the processionists marching through the main bazaars and streets of the city reached Kabli Gate police post, 15 of them were arrested. The procession, thereafter, in its characteristically peaceful manner, marched back and terminated at Bazar-i-Kalan.

Begum Kamaluddin with other five arrested ladies was brought back from Kohat to Peshawar in police custody, where they were later released, according to the information available from the League office.

While in Kohat, on May 11, a very big procession, followed by another women's procession, was taken out in defiance of the Government ban. Five of the processionists were arrested.

The total number of arrests made that day was, according to OPI, 55.

About 25 League workers, who after their release were returning to their villages by train, were re-arrested at the railway station.

A Hindu Railway officer always takes Hindu passengers free in his reserved bogie to Rawalpindi. The railway authorities have been informed to this effect.

A bomb explosion was heard at about 10 p.m. on the night of May 10 near Babu Ram building, where another bomb explosion took place a few days back. Consequently, much panic prevails here at the attitude of the local authorities in not making searches in the houses belonging to the minority community where bombs and arms are alleged to have been kept in store. Great resentment is also felt about the present hours of the curfew clapped down on the city from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m.

Railway stations were picketed and Pakistan tickets were issued by the League volunteers at Nowshera, Mardan, Hathian and Takhatbhai.

There were processions, meetings, court picketing and other forms of demonstration in almost all provincial towns.

29. 'Badshah Khan's Call to Leaguers'

The Hindustan Times, 14 May 1947.

Peshawar, May 13.—An appeal to Muslim League leaders to sit with Khudai Khidmatgars in a joint jirga to tackle the various issues that may arise after the British quit India was made by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan addressing a public meeting in 'Iliqa Khalil', Peshawar district, yesterday.

He said: 'Leaguers fear Hindu domination, while we fear British domination. Let us meet together. We are prepared to allay their fears. But, I ask, would they in return allay our fears?'

This is the foremost issue to be considered and then will follow others which vitally affect the interests of Pathans and in regard to which everyone of us, of whatever political persuasion and economic interests, must be sincerely anxious'.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan warned the Pathans that resort to methods of violence would mean their annihilation. If they wanted their fair name to be maintained, they should eschew violence and hatred from their hearts.

30. '250 Workers Arrested in Kohat, More Red Shirts Join League Movement'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 20 May 1947.

Kohat, Monday.—For the last fortnight, the younger brother of Pir Sahib Manki Sharif, accompanied by Mian Abdulla Shah, Haji Said Shah and Ali Mohammad Khan, has been carrying on extensive tour in the rural areas of this district. They addressed huge gatherings in about a score of villages, as a result of which a large number of Red Shirts joined the Muslim League.

In the meetings, resolutions were passed expressing no confidence in the Congress ministry, and reiterating full confidence in the leadership of the Qaed-e-Azam.

After the Friday prayers on May 16, at a meeting held at Bahadur Khan Mosque, the following resolutions were passed:

That the Muslim League strongly condemns the action of the Congress ministry in indiscriminately arresting respectable League workers under Section 40 FCR.

That the present curfew hours from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. interfere with the religious rights of the Muslims, who are debarred from offering their congregational prayers.

Khan Should Follow Khizr

That it is the time when the Khan brothers should join the Muslim League and follow the noble example of Malik Khizr Hayat Khan, the ex-Premier of Punjab.

The same day, the civil courts in the Kohat district were picketed, resulting in the suspension of work. 150 picketers were arrested. A huge procession of men and women marched through the main bazaars at 6 p.m. Five processionists were arrested and, following their arrest, five lady processionists offered themselves for arrest but were refused arrest. The procession dispersed at the Jinnah Park, after a speech by the Muslim League leaders.

Haji Said Shah, the President of the District League, was arrested under Sec. 40 FCR on May 17. Consequently, all the schools remained closed and the students marched in a procession to the civil courts for picketing, but the police dispersed them, arresting six of them....

Courts Paralysed

After the students were arrested, the courts were picketed by men from the Ustarzai village who suspended the work of the courts for a few hours 90 of these were arrested.

In the evening, as usual, a huge procession followed by 2,000 ladies marched through the main bazaars. The processionists held street-corner meetings at various places in defiance of Sec. 144 CrPC. Five of the processionists were arrested.

All the schools here remained closed for the day. The students marched towards the civil courts in a procession to picket them. But the police arrested six of them and dispersed the rest.

31. Report from NWFP

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on NWFP for the First Half of May 1947, 27 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI.

...Political and Communal. Although the Muslim League agitation has by no means been abandoned, and indeed has been endorsed by Mr M.A. Jinnah in his recent broadcast, its intensity has been markedly less. The general picture given in my report for the second half of April remains unchanged in so far as the nature of the agitation goes; and to this may be added the appearance in several places of highly inflammatory broadsheets inciting the public to communal as well as political hostility. There has been some increase, also, in the number of bomb outrages, although the amount of damage done by them has been negligible. Hindus and Sikhs have also continued to emigrate in large numbers, especially from Bannu. But the number of demonstrators, picketers, and of people interfering with trains has greatly decreased. This decrease might have been more marked but for the greater frequency with which processions of women have been taken out, particularly in Peshawar. No method has yet been devised of adequately controlling these. The harvest probably has much to do with this reduced activity but the strongest reason is probably to be found in a general air of expectancy that an announcement is shortly to be made in Delhi and that until then it is sufficient to keep the agitation alive without pressing it to extremes.

That it would not take much to arouse it to dangerous proportions has been shown by several incidents. On May 10th, for example, a Martyrs' Day was observed in Peshawar, Mardan, and Kohat to commemorate the two men killed near the Legislative Assembly on March 10th when the military were forced to open fire. Substantial crowds took part in these celebrations. Again considerable indignation was worked up in Kohat on May 11th, when an externment order was served on a certain Begum Kamal-ud-Din, and on that day and the next processions ran into several thousands. On April 29th the house of a Muslim in Haripur, Hazara District, accidentally caught fire while he was working in his fields and two children were burnt to death. Malice was quick to impute this to incendiarism by the troops stationed there, and attempts were made for Friday May 2nd to be celebrated on a large scale as a Martyrs' Day for the two children. Communal tension was extreme but fortunately influential people managed to get the celebrations cancelled. In this way the pot continues to simmer, and commerce and Government work continues to suffer.

An offshoot of the agitation has been an attempt at a no-rent campaign in parts of Hazara District and adjacent independent territory. It appears to have been initiated by the Ahrars, and though it has not achieved serious proportions, there is always danger of its doing so in the prevailing lawless atmosphere.

A measure of peace has returned to Dera Ismail Khan District, though occasional raids have taken place by gangs composed partly of Trans-border Tribesmen and partly of local bad characters. The measures taken by the local civil and military authorities have been so thorough that hardly one of these raids has not either been repulsed at the outset or interrupted at an early stage with deterrent casualties to the culprits. Total casualties in the District upto April 25th amounted to 121 of all communities killed and 89 of all communities wounded. Three quarters of those killed and about half of those wounded were of minority communities. The damage in Dera Ismail Khan City is estimated to be of the value of nearly rupees one crore; while the town of Tank has very largely ceased to exist. Apart from the horrible implications

of these figures in terms of human suffering, it is no exaggeration to say that the effects on commerce also imply an economic calamity to the District and the adjacent Tribal Areas not only through the destruction of property and goods, but also through the emigration of many thousands of those upon whom commerce depended.

The situation in the jails has if anything deteriorated. It was hoped that the party of Muslim League leaders who visited Delhi on parole for discussions at the beginning of the month might return with a decision to meet the Provincial Government's proclaimed amnesty at least half way. They did return on May 7th, but the decision was that they should maintain the *status quo ante*. The leaders themselves have on several occasions shown that they are capable of controlling their more extreme followers. But in the absence of the leaders first in the Peshawar Jail and later in Delhi, Haripur Jail in particular and others to a less extent proved turbulent. Assaults on Jail staff and damage to Jail property have been reported from Dera Ismail Khan and Haripur; and everywhere discipline has been defied. The Provincial Government decided on May 9th that in these circumstances the privileges extended to political prisoners must be withdrawn even if the process should lead to serious disturbances. It has begun in Peshawar Jail and so far no untoward incident has occurred. It is, however, still too early to be confident that yet another crisis may not have to be faced....

32. 'Campaign of Communal Aggression Can't Be Called Civil Disobedience'

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 28 May 1947.

Peshawar, May 20.—Mr Mehr Chand Khanna, Finance and Information Minister, Frontier Government, says in a press statement, 'I take strong objection to the statement of Lord Listowel, Secretary of State for India, in the House of Lords on May 21 in reply to a question by Lord Lloyd that the Muslim League campaign of civil disobedience had been started against the Frontier Congress Ministry and that campaign had taken the form of peaceful processions and demonstrations.

'I do not know from where Lord Listowel got his facts. I can only say in my capacity as Information Minister that I was never consulted. Common courtesy demands that Provincial Government should be consulted before questions of policy are answered and data given. To allow Lord Listowel to get a clear picture of so-called civil disobedience campaign I am instructing the Information Department to send him copies of all official communiqués.

'It is wrong to call an organized campaign of communal aggression and violence as civil disobedience. Since shooting and killing started in Hazara, Frontier District, one out of every 4,000 Hindus and Sikhs in the Frontier has been murdered. Due to this orgy of loot, arson and murder a very large proportion of Hindu and Sikh population has left the province. Meetings and processions could not be described as peaceful even by any stretch of imagination. In the former violence is openly preached and in the latter openly practiced. The first so called peaceful procession was started in Mardan on February 19 by inflicting bodily injuries on members of minority communities and by looting their property. It was followed by an organized raid on the house of the Premier in Peshawar. After two days, attempts were even made on the lives of the Hon'ble Premier and the Education Minister. There are many other cases in which processionists shot dead peaceful citizens. Provocative speeches were made in Dera Ismail Khan, another Frontier District which saw worst cases of atrocities, perpetrated by

any human being. It may be pointed out that this happened after the so-called peace appeal had been made by the President of the All India Muslim League.' ...

33. 'D.I.K. Scheduled Castes Support Pakistan'

Dawn, 30 May 1947.

PESHAWAR. Wednesday.—The newly formed Federation of Scheduled Castes of Dera Ismil Khan has passed a unanimous resolution, pledging their support for Pakistan.

The Muslim League flag was hoisted over their houses on Sunday to declare their sympathy with the Muslim League civil liberties campaign.

34. 'Waziri Tribesmen Reaffirm Faith in Pakistan'

Dawn, 1 June 1947.

D.I. Khan, Saturday.—A huge public meeting was held at Khan Gurum (Waziristan) under the presidentship of Captain Mir Badshah Khan, Chief of Mahsuda tribes. The Waziris once again expressed their unflinching faith in Pakistan and declared to fight for it to the last. On June 5, a bigger meeting has been called which will be presided by Shahzada Fazaldin Khān uncrowned king of Waziristan.

In a resolution tribes made protest against Government who arrested 600 Mahsuds near Bannu and asked Government to release them.

Courts were picketed yesterday in D.I. Khan. Ghulam Sarwar Khan and Sher Khan Vice-President and President of Paniala respectively with 13 picketers have been arrested. Frontier Muslims are determined to face many troubles till the Congress Ministry is removed from office.

Frontier Muslims through province-wide agitation have shown that they are against the Congress rule.

Due to the untiring efforts of Pir Sahib of Zakori, Member of Frontier Assembly, D.I. Khan and Bannu have become the centre of League activities since the movement of civil disobedience has started in Frontier. It was Pir Sahib's efforts that the Congress false propaganda was torn asunder in Frontier in general and in Bannu and D.I. Khan in particular. Every Pathan in this province is prepared to lay his life on one call of Pir Sahib. Thousands of his disciples have thronged jails in N-WFP.

Government have stopped arresting mojahidins as there is no space in jalis. Civil Liberty Movement is in full swing gaining strength day by day. Pir Sahib of Zakori is determined to continue the struggle till Khan's Ministry go out of office.

35. 'NWFP League Movement Withdrawn'

Dawn, 2 June 1947.

NEW DELHI. Tuesday.—Mr Sher Bahadur Khan, Secretary, Frontier Muslim League War Council, in a statement tonight said: 'I have been directed by Mr Samin Jan Khan, President, Frontier Muslim League, that in view of the announcement made by the Viceroy and the broadcast by the Qaed-e-Azam the League movement of civil disobedience in the NWFP should be suspended forthwith.

The formal withdrawal of the movement will be decided upon by the provincial Muslim League when it meets on the 9th instant. I, therefore, call upon all the war councils in the province to cease their activities and also direct that prisoners, convicted in connection with the movement and still under trial orders for whose release had been issued by the provincial Government sometime back, should come out of jails at once'.—API

36. Demand for Removal of NWFP Governor

Extract from a Note by M.K. Gandhi to Louis Mountbatten, 2 June 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVIII, p. 60.

...Badshah Khan is with me in the Bhangi Colony. He said 'Do ask the Viceroy to remove the Governor. We won't have peace till he is gone.' I don't know whether he is right or wrong. He is truthful. If it can be done decorously, you should do it.

Chapter 20. Division of Punjab

1. Against Partition of Punjab

Extract from an Article in *The Tribune*, 23 March 1947.

[The proposed partition of the Punjab is a question of great importance not only to this province, but also to the rest of the country. While publishing Prof Brij Narain's article against partition we invite those political thinkers who are for it to make their contribution to the discussion. Owing to the extraordinary pressure on the space in the 'Tribune' we shall be able to publish just a few selected articles.—Ed. 'T.']

The Congress Working Committee, in its meeting at New Delhi on 8th of March, took an important decision, without realizing its implications. We are referring to the proposed partition of the Punjab.

In the earlier part of the Resolution there is a reference to the Congress having already expressed its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's scheme of May 16, 1946 and of 'the interpretations put upon it by the British Cabinet on December 16'. The Resolution on the Punjab seeks to find a settlement of the Punjab problem involving 'the least amount of compulsion.' 'This would necessitate a division of the Punjab into two provinces,' the resolutions proceeds, 'so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part.' The Congress Working Committee commends this solution which, it thinks, 'should work to the advantage of all the communities concerned and lessen friction and fear and suspicion of each other.'

Partition and the Cabinet Mission's Scheme

It may be noted in the first place that the demand for the partition of the Punjab is not consistent with the Congress acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's scheme. There is no partition of any province in this scheme, but the grouping of the Provinces into Sections. The place of the Punjab is in Section B. The Cabinet Mission's scheme does not grant to any 'part of a province' the right to frame its own constitution, or to opt out of its Section, now or at any subsequent time. I am stating this as a fact and no useful purpose is served by ignoring facts. Either the Congress has accepted the Cabinet Mission's scheme or it has not. Assuming that the Congress has accepted this scheme 'in its entirety', the Congress cannot demand the division of the Punjab into two provinces.

Two Questions

But this is a small point. The British have fixed a date for 'quitting India,' and we may draw up any kind of constitution, ignoring the Cabinet Mission's scheme. The Punjab may be

partitioned, if the League and the Congress agree. There are two main questions to consider: Is the partition of the Punjab practicable, and secondly, is it advisable?

Many readers of the 'Tribune' would be inclined to answer the first question in the affirmative. We take a map of the Punjab, and draw a line somewhere—the Punjab is divided into two provinces. How very simple!

But the drawing of this line would not be a simple affair. It would be a most difficult operation and it would arouse a controversy which would not be settled before June 1948. Apart from this, the inclusion of a district, or part of a district, in a certain zone, and its exclusion from the other zone, would create a situation which might lead eventually to organized civil war....

In the whole province there is majority of Muslims, 57.06 per cent. If the partition were to take place by Divisions, and simple majority were the criterion, then the League would claim the following Divisions: Multan, Rawalpindi and Lahore. But the Congress Resolution speaks of 'predominantly' Muslim and non-Muslim parts. What is the interpretation of 'predominantly'? Is the Lahore Division, with a Muslim majority of 58.18 per cent of the total population, a predominantly Muslim area? An authoritative definition of the term 'predominantly' is required. Who is to provide this definition? If the Congress and the League fail to reach an agreement on this point, which is not unlikely, will the dispute be referred to the U.N.O.?

Some Interesting Cases

Next consider the distribution of the population by district. In Ferozepur the Muslim percentage is 45.07 and of Hindus and Sikhs combined 53.31. Ferozepur is predominantly neither a Hindu-Sikh area, nor a Muslim area. Who is to secure Ferozepur, the Congress or the League? The Muslims have a bare majority in Gurdaspur, 51.14. The League cannot have it because it is not a 'predominantly' Muslim district, and the Congress cannot claim it as there is a Hindu-Sikh minority in the district. In Amritsar, again there is bare majority of Hindus and Sikhs. It will be seen that partition on the basis of predominantly Muslim and non-Muslim areas will raise enormous difficulties.

Who Will Get Lahore?

Will the rich prize of Lahore, with its University, libraries, colleges and industries fall to the League? Or will there be a partition of Lahore and its wealth? Try to answer this question, and you will realize the senselessness of the proposal to divide the Punjab into two provinces. It is easy to adopt resolutions it is not so easy to put them into effect.

Fate of Minorities

The advisability of partition may be considered from several points of view. We may begin with the fate of minorities in the predominantly Muslim and non-Muslim areas after partition has taken place.

Is a transfer of populations contemplated? Writing in the 'Tribune' dated December 5, 1946 ('Power Politics.' III) I said, 'when the Congress has not been able to prevent the economic partition of the country, how would it prevent the political partition when it comes? Supposing widespread disturbances continue with large-scale murder, looting and arson, political partition, with the transfer of populations from one area to another, would become inevitable.'

The Congress now itself demands the political partition of the Punjab, which is only the first step towards the political partition of India. There are over 28 per cent Muslims in the Ambala

Division and over 34 per cent Muslims in the Jullundur Division. In the predominantly Muslim Division of Multan, Hindus and Sikhs form over 21 per cent of the population. Are minorities to be left to the tender mercies of majority community? The Congress resolution says nothing about it, but Mahatma Gandhi's views about moving minorities to their majority areas are well known. Members of a minority community must stay where they are, and allow themselves to be killed or roasted alive, whenever it should please the majority community to do so.

It will be said that safeguards would be provided for minorities. The majority community in every part of India has repeatedly declared that it will stand forth as the protector of minorities. Such declarations mean nothing. They mean nothing in our country, as large scale murder, looting and arson in Bihar and the Punjab have shown,...

2. Fate of Minorities in Jhelum District

Letter from Joginder Singh Danona to General Secretary, Provincial Congress Committee, 2 April 1947

AICC Papers, File No. G-34/1947, NMML.

From: Joginder Singh Danona,
For Hindu and Sikh Families of Village: BHAUN
Mohalla Kochhran, BHAUN, Distt Jhelum.
Dated 2nd April, 1947.

To: The General Secretary,
Provincial Congress Committee,
Lahore.
Through the Secy., Distt CC Jhelum.

Dear Comrade,

In view of the AICC resolution recommending partition of the Punjab, I have the honour to approach you on behalf of the Hindu and Sikh families of my village and request you to please clarify these points by the return of the post.

1. We who are hardly 7 per cent in these districts are being solely left on the mercy of the Majority Community in these Distt.
2. In case the scheme passed by the AICC is put into effect, what arrangements are under consideration for our migration to the native places where our community is in a majority?
3. In view of the fact that we about 50 families of this Village intend to migrate from this side to the Eastern Punjab or the United Provinces, may I please be informed that possible facilities can be accorded for our settlement in the Eastern Punjab or United Provinces.
4. I shall be glad if you contact the United Provinces Government and stress on them the necessity of providing us a temporary shelter for the present and some 100 Bighas of land where about 200 families can be settled and the place should be near the Railway Station where ... facilities would be forthcoming. We are quite willing to buy the land which if at all is at distance of about 6 miles from Railway Station but should be sold to us on a very reasonable price.

I feel sure that you will take steps to ensure that necessary accommodation is provided to us and about 100 Bighas of land is provided to us with facilities of taking shelter in the first instance.

I expect a very early reply and your advice in the matter by the return of post rather inform me telegraphically.

I am, Sir,
Yours, etc etc etc.
Joginder Singh Danona,
Mohalla Kochhran, BHAUN,
Distt Jhelum.
Dated 2nd April, 1947.

NB.: In case the land can be provided and Temp. Shelter can also be arranged, I should be informed telegraphically enabling me to leave straightaway for the destination.

3. Appeal for Partition of Punjab into Two Provinces

Letter from Some Members of the Indian Central Legislature to Jawaharlal Nehru,
2 April 1947
IOR, R/3/1/157, Acc. No. 3820, NAI.

Sir,

We, the undersigned Members of the Central Legislature from the Punjab, beg to submit the following for favour of forwarding the same with your endorsement to HE the Viceroy and to HMG for their urgent consideration and immediate action thereon:

Unfortunately, the relation between the Muslims and Non-Muslims in the Punjab were already much strained due to the agitation carried on by the Muslim League for Pakistan, but the recent tragic happenings in North-Western Punjab have very rudely shaken the confidence of the Hindu and the Sikh minorities in the belief that there will be any fair deal for them at the hands of the Muslims in future.

The Muslims and Non-Muslims are almost equally balanced and no Government can carry on without the support of the three communities. Fortunately the population of the Province is so divided that there are distinct and contiguous areas where Muslims and Non-Muslims predominate. We have given our anxious and deep thought to this problem after considering all its pros and cons. We have come to the conclusion that the only way out of the present dead-lock is to partition the Punjab into two Provinces. That and that alone, in our view, can ease the tension in the Province which may increase at any moment. We further venture to add that it is no longer a long term constitutional issue, but an urgent and immediate administrative problem which should have first priority. Effective steps may, therefore, be taken forthwith to constitute two Provinces out of the present Punjab by passing an *Order-in-Council* or by any other way which may be found suitable. We are fully convinced that Partition is the only solution of this vexed problem.

We are, Sir,
Your most obedient servants,

- (1) Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava MLA
- (2) Raizada Hans Raj MLA

- (3) Diwan Chaman Lall MLA
- (4) Sardar Mangal Singh MLA
- (5) Sardar Sampuran Singh MLA
- (6) Sardar Surjit Singh Majithia MLA
- (7) S.B. Capt Harindra Singh MLA
- (8) S.B. Sir Sobha Singh MCS
- (9) Ch Sri Chand MLA
- (10) Sir Buta Singh MCS
- (11) Ft Lt Rup Chand MCS

4. Only Sikhs Can Demand Partition

Letter from Firoz Khan Noon to M.A. Jinnah, 4 April 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I., Part I, pp. 495–6.

Faletti's Hotel, Lahore

Dear Mr Jinnah,

The following may be useful to you in your talks with the Viceroy.

1. A division of the Punjab can only be demanded by the Sikhs. The Hindus cannot object to living with a Muslim majority because we live in UP, Bihar, and other places.
2. The Sikhs can only claim special consideration if they are a separate community from the Hindus.
3. Seen as a separate community, the Sikhs do not predominate in any *tehsil* in any of the districts in the Punjab except in only the following few:

(a)	Ambala District	M[uslims]	S[ikhs]
	Tehsil Kharar	39,156	68,508
	Tehsil Rupar	52,400	61,847
(b)	Hoshiarpur District		
	Tehsil Garh Shankar	67,584	70,310
(c)	Ludhiana District		
	Tehsil Jagraon	81,380	1,10,061
	Tehsil Samrala	49,620	63,103
(d)	Ferozepore District		
	Tehsil Moga	66,855	1,81,458
(e)	Amritsar District		
	Tehsil Tarntaran	1,57,731	1,99,562

You will see how far apart these places are and how few. There is a move to create a federation of all Sikh States. These almost adjoin except Kapurthala. Patiala, Jind, Nabha and Faridkot are almost limitrophe. (Malerkotla is a Muslim State.) The Sikhs, if they were unhappy in the Br[itish] Punjab as it exists today, they could move into these Sikh kingdoms.

Yours sincerely,
 Firoz Noon

5. 'Haryana Jats Support Sikhs' Demand'

The Tribune, 6 April 1947

Hissar, April 5.—'The Haryana Jats are completely in agreement with the Sikhs in making the demand for the division of the Punjab and they will not lag behind in making any sacrifice for fulfilment of this end. In saying this I am voicing the feeling of one and all of the Haryana Pranta,' says Rao Bahadur Surajmal, MLA, member of the Constituent Assembly in the course of a statement.

The following is the full text of the statement:

The Hindus in the Punjab form more than 30 per cent of its population and according to its population they are the second largest community in the Punjab. Bulk of their population comes from the Hindu zamindars of the South East Punjab and sub-mountainous districts of Hoshiarpur, Kangra, Gurdaspur and Sialkot. In importance too the Hindus are second to none in the Punjab. In landed and other properties they have got a better position in the Punjab than others. They have got the best fighting material. The Hindu Jats of Haryana, the Rajputs, Ahirs, Gujjars and the Dogras of Hoshiarpur and Kangra districts have shown their mettle in the last two world wars which took place during the last 30 years. These Hindu communities are not to be cowed down or brow-beaten in any way by anybody. There might have been some differences amongst the Hindus in the past but there can be no denying the fact that they have got the perfect unanimity on the point that they are not going to submit to the rule of any one community in the Punjab and that they are opposed to any scheme which may give political power to any single community.

Hindus, as such, form an overwhelming majority in almost all the districts south of river Sutlej. These districts have never been a part of the proper Punjab before the advent of the British rule and no power on earth now can throw them at the mercy of any single community. Politically, linguistically, culturally they always formed a part of the old Delhi province. It was the British who brought them over to the Punjab after it had been annexed to the British rule.

Some 20 years ago a conference was held at Delhi under the presidentship of the late Sir Chhotu Ram to consider the creation of a separate province and it was then unanimously decided to work for the separation of the Ambala division.

The question was even raised at the Round Table Conference and a scheme was prepared.

The recent events have once again brought this question into prominence.

The re-distribution of the boundaries of provinces and creation of new provinces has always been contemplated by the main political parties on linguistic and cultural basis and I do not see any difficulty in the way of the Muslim League to accede to the legitimate demand of the Hindus and Sikhs. Thus this long-standing controversy will cease.

The Haryana Jats are completely in agreement with the Sikhs in making the demand for the division of the Punjab and they will not lag behind in making any sacrifice for the fulfilment of the end. In saying this I am voicing the feeling of one and all of the Haryana Prant.



6. Sikhs Prepare for Violent Attack on Muslims

Extract from a Letter from Evan Jenkins to Louis Mountbatten, 9 April 1947
IOR, R/3/1/176, Acc. No. 3477, NAI.

SECRET

No. 663

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

There is now little doubt that some at least of the Sikh leaders are preparing for a violent agitation against the Muslims in the Punjab. I append for Your Excellency's information translations of two Gurmukhi documents:

- (1) an unsigned pamphlet giving a grossly exaggerated account of events in the Rawalpindi Division; and
- (2) an appeal purporting to be signed by 18 Sikhs, including Sardar Baldev Singh, for what appears to be a 'war fund' of Rs 50 lakhs.

Document (1) was distributed some days ago by Giani Kartar Singh to Akali Jathedars and Secretaries from all over the Punjab and the Punjab States. Document (2) came into our hands in print by accident; it was sent to the *Ajit* (a Lahore newspaper) by the Shiromani Akali Dal for publication. The editor did not publish it in full, but misdirected a copy to our Press Branch apparently in place of a document on which he wanted Press advice....

Enclosure 1

Translation of Gurmukhi Pamphlet (five sheets).

'Thousands of innocent Sikhs murdered in cold blood.'

'Loot and arson in Attock and Jhelum Districts. Villages after villages destroyed and razed to the ground.'

'Sikhs! Read Patiently and Ponder over it.'

'In order to establish Pakistan, the atrocities committed on Sikhs in the Punjab since 5th March 1947 have not come to light because of censorship on news. Although the Sikh population is small in the Districts of Attock, Rawalpindi and Jhelum, they own valuable property in these places. All the Sikh residents of these districts, excepting only a few, have been done to death, their properties looted, houses burnt, women outraged and many young girls forcibly converted to Islam. Their woeful tale is worth your patient hearing. But all this has been done according to a pre-arranged plan. At first, the Muslims took the Sikhs into their confidence on the pretext of providing them shelter from being attacked. Later, they were forced to part with their money in order to pay to the goondas who threatened to attack them. Even so, they were attacked and looted. Besides spears and swords, guns and bombs were also used. Lambardars were the ring-leaders of the goondas. Only the lives of those Sikh women were saved who agreed to their forcible conversion to Islam. The others either committed suicide or were burnt alive. The souls of all these innocent women are crying for help. The goondas had brought camels and bullock-carts to take away the booty. About thirty thousand Sikh lives have been saved by the Military, and all of them are now in Relief Camps. Those who owned lacs of rupees are today longing for a piece of bread'.

Herewith are details of incidents village by village:

[This section is omitted.]

There are thousands of Sikhs in Relief Camps, including women and children. They stand in need of everything. Thousands of young girls need clothing.

Oh Sikhs! Read this and think yourself. What have you to do under the circumstances? In your veins, there is yet the blood of your beloved Guru Gobind Singhji. Do your duty.

Enclosure 2

Translation of a Pamphlet Printed by the *Ajit* of Lahore (5/4/47):

‘O, Khalsaji! A critical condition has arisen for the Panth which arose after the last great Ghallughara (general massacre of Sikhs). The Ghallughara which has occurred specially in Pothohar and the Frontier is too painful for us to describe. It is not yet known what the future will bring. The time is extremely grave and situation is extremely critical. Now for us matters have gone to the extent of “throne or the coffin”. In order to maintain the existence of the Panth at this juncture, every Sikh should do his duty to the Guru’s Panth. In obedience to the Panth, lies the life of a Sikh. By dint of their strength the Muslims want to thrust Pakistan on Sikhs, Hindus and Christians and they have already shown to us a specimen of Pakistan storm. In their majority zones they have perpetrated such tyrannies as cannot be described. Thousands of Sikh and Hindu women and children have been murdered; Keshas and beards of hundreds have been chopped off and an effort has been made to convert them to Islam; hundreds of women have been abducted; whole villages have been burnt up. Hundreds of chaste women jumped into wells and have sacrificed their lives in many other ways in order to preserve their honour. The Panth which plumed itself on rescuing others’ girls, finds its own daughters in the hands of tyrants. Rest assured, as it is only a small specimen of Pakistan and more terrible incidents are yet to come. But Khalsaji, we are the Sikhs of that Guru who having had his four children slaughtered said: “what if four have fallen. Thousands still survive.” We have to fight this tyrannical Pakistan and have to keep the Panth in high airs. This Panth has been prospering all the more after every Ghallughara and rest assured that even now the Panth will prosper. Be alert; you should recover yourself.

Fifty lakhs of rupees are required at this time for fighting the Pakistan in which lies our death. Although our community is poor, it has been winning every morcha by dint of sacrifice in the name of Tenth Guru. It is our vigorous appeal that money should be collected from every house, every mohalla, every village and every city for achieving victory in the forthcoming clash. Collect one rupee per head. If poor Sikhs are unable to pay rupee one per head, it is the religious duty of the Sikhs of that village or town to make up the deficiency. In this way 50 lakh rupees should be collected very soon. This sum should be collected up to the 15th Baisakh.

This Baisakh should prove a re-birth of the Khalsa and should always serve to give encouragement to the Sikhs in history. Besides, entire Sikh public is requested to offer prayers every day for “Victory to the Panth”. Such a terrible conflict is approaching that even the sum of Rs 50 lakhs collected once cannot be sufficient. Hence all Sikhs are requested to give one-tenth of their income for this task. And in every house one handful of flour should be set apart for the Guru’s Fund at the time of kneading flour.

Note: For purposes of receiving this money, S. Baldev Singh Defence Member, Government of India, Delhi and Sardar Bhag Singh (of Gurdaspur) Advocate, Teja Singh Hall, Amritsar have been appointed treasurers. Collected money should be sent to one of these two persons by hand or by money order.’

Tara Singh (Master)
Harkishan Singh (Bawa)
Bagh Singh (Advocate)
Jogindar Singh Mann, MLA
Gurbachan Singh, MLA
Indar Singh, MLA, Cawnpore
Mohan Singh Jathedar Sri Akal Takht Sahib
Buta Singh (Sir)
Udham Singh Nagoke
Jagjit Singh Mann, MLA
Pritam Singh Gujran, Pardhan, Shrimoni Riasti Akali Dal
Santokh Singh, ex-MLA
Kartar Singh Giani, MLA, Pardhan, Shrimoni Akali Dal
Baldev Singh (Hon'ble) Delhi
Jaswant Singh Duggal, MLA
Ujjal Singh, MLA
Narotam Singh, Advocate, Hissar.
Hukam Singh, Advocate, Montgomery.

7. Sikhs Demand Partition

Note by Evan Jenkins on His Interview with Giani Kartar Singh, 10 April 1947
IOR, R/3/1/176, Acc. No. 3477, NAI.

Giani Kartar Singh came to see me at his request at 4 p.m. today. I gave him a letter from P.S.V., which had just arrived, and also a letter from P.S.V. to Master Tara Singh, which he promised to deliver immediately. I said that I understood that the letters contained invitations to an interview with HE the Viceroy.

2. Giani Kartar Singh said that it was in anticipation of such an invitation that he had come to see me. He wished me to plead the Sikh cause with HE. I asked him what the Sikhs really wanted. He replied that HMG might endeavour to settle with the Muslim League and the Congress (a) on the basis of the Statement of 16th May 1946, or (b) on some other basis. It would be grossly unfair for the British to leave India without making proper provision for the Sikhs.

I suggested that we assume (a) in the first instance. If Mr Jinnah and the Congress leaders decided to co-operate in the Constituent Assembly, would the Sikhs co-operate also or would they stand out?

The Giani replied that the Sikhs were still dissatisfied with the Statement of 16th May 1946. They would go into the Constituent Assembly if they were guaranteed in Section B the same right of communal veto as had been granted to the Muslims in the full Assembly.

Moreover, the Sikhs were now convinced that there must be an immediate partition of the Punjab. The two new Provinces could both be in Section B, but both must have the right to contract out of the new constitution.

I pointed out here that partition would be extraordinarily difficult and that I personally was convinced that unionism was the best thing for Punjabis. If partition were sanctioned, I doubted if the Hindu Jats of the Ambala Division would wish to be included in the Sikh State.

Their idea was to form a separate Jat State, including the whole or part of the Meerut Division of the United Provinces and a large part of the Ambala Division of the Punjab.

The Giani said that the Sikhs had no intention of coercing the Hindu Jats and that if the Hindu Jats wanted a separate Province of their own, he would raise no objection. The Sikh conception was of a non-Muslim State, including nearly the whole of the Sikh country. Such a State would be amalgamated or federated with the Pakistan States, and should be free to join Hindustan or Pakistan, or to remain completely independent and to make a separate treaty with HMG.

I questioned the Giani as to his ideas about boundaries. He said that the Sikhs would let the Hindu Jats have Rohtak, Gurgaon, about half the Karnal district, and about half the Hissar district. They would expect the remainder of Karnal and Hissar, the whole or the greater part of Ambala and the whole of Simla to be included in the Sikh State. They thought the Ravi the most suitable boundary between the Sikh State and the Muslim State; but he personally would not insist upon the Sikhs taking over Lahore City. He made it clear that he would wish Montgomery to be included in the Sikh State, and that Nankana Sahib in the Sheikhupura district and its neighbouring villages should be a 'free city'. He thought once the partition had been effected, there would be voluntary movements of population and that the Sikhs now living in the Lyallpur district would exchange with Muslims living in Montgomery.

I repeated my arguments against partition. I said that I thought it would mean economic and political ruin, and asked whether the Giani's ideas excluded some sort of a Punjab Federation. He replied that he would have no objection to a Federation of a limited kind, for example, for such subjects as Irrigation and Electric Power; but it would have to be a voluntary Federation between equals, and there could be no question of Muslim domination over the Sikhs.

3. I asked him if he thought the Muslims would accept a partition. He said that he really did not know, but that it was the only solution of the present communal problem, which could not be solved in any other way. I said that if the Muslims did not agree to partition and if partition were ordered, a very considerable force would be needed to effect it. The Giani said cheerfully that we had only to put the two Governments into office and they would see to the rest. The British had taken the Punjab from the Sikhs, and it would be logical enough to return it to them.

4. I then took the discussion to (b) in paragraph 2 above—the possibility of an agreement between HMG, the Muslim League and the Congress on some new basis—and to the possibility of a complete breakdown. I asked the Giani if he thought any settlement likely. He said that the Sikhs did not particularly want a settlement, and would accept no settlement which did not provide for them. The British could not fairly disregard the Sikhs who during the last century had supported them in many ways. If they liked, they could leave the Punjab without a Government, and the communities would then fight it out; but the Sikhs would not tolerate any arrangement which placed them under the domination of another community. He realized that my advice would be taken by HE the Viceroy and he trusted that I would do nothing to injure the Sikh case or to suggest the feasibility of any arrangement that did not satisfy the Sikhs. I said that I had always done my best to help the Sikh community, since I was well aware of their importance in the Punjab. I doubted if India could be peaceful if the Punjab were in a state of chaos; and the Punjab could hardly be peaceful if the Sikhs were not

reasonably satisfied with their political condition. I had as great an affection for the Punjab as for my own country, since I had spent the greater part of my life here, and my only object was to leave the Punjab in the best possible state from the point of view of Punjabis. For the reasons I had given I was against partition; but if the Punjabis would be satisfied with nothing else, they would presumably get their own way in the end. But the difficulties of partition were enormous, and I hoped that the Sikhs would not rule out the possibility of some local settlement with the Muslim League.

The Giani then said that the Muslim League had shown no real signs of wanting a settlement. They had talked about it constantly, but their whole attitude had been that they were a separate nation and must dominate the entire Punjab. They could only do that by force and the Sikhs would not let them do so. He quite appreciated my sentimental dislike of partition—the British had done a great deal for the Punjab during the last century and naturally hated to destroy their own handiwork. Whatever HMG decided to do now he hoped that the decision would be fair to all.

5. I took the opportunity of mentioning to the Giani the undesirable character of his propaganda—particularly two recent Gurmukhi pamphlets about events in the Rawalpindi Division and about the need for a ‘war fund’ of Rs 50 lakhs. The Giani said that he had not read the first of these pamphlets (as I think he distributed it himself, I doubt if this statement was true), but would correct any inaccuracies which it contained. I pointed out that whatever his intentions might be, propaganda of this kind gave the impression that the Sikhs were about to attack the Muslims. The Giani laughed heartily at this, and said that the Sikhs would do no such thing until after the British left India. They had no intention of fighting a war on two fronts, nor would it be in their interest to annoy the British unnecessarily at the present stage.

6. The Giani ended our interview by detailing a number of grievances and suggestions of the usual kind, on which I have made a separate note.

E.M.J.

8. Rejection of Congress Plan for Partition

Note by A.R. Khan, 12 April 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I., pp. 522–7.

A SHORT COMMENTARY ON THE RECENT CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE'S RESOLUTION FOR A DIVISION OF THE PUNJAB

...The above table¹ gives the population as well as percentage of various communities in the 11 districts of the Punjab, where Muslims do not form a clear majority, that is, 51 per cent or over.

According to an article which appeared in the *Statesman*, dated 16th March 1947, the Hindu–Sikh demand for a separate province in the Punjab, where non-Muslims are in majority, also included the district of Gurdaspur. It is not understood on what theory this claim of the Hindus and Sikhs is based since the community-wise position in that district is quite different, as would be evident from the following figures of 1941 Census.

Gurdaspur—

Hindus including Jains, Scheduled

Castes and Ad-Dharmis	2,83,200
Others including Sikhs	2,30,100
Christians	50,300

Total: Non-Muslims 5,63,600

Total: Muslims 5,89,900

Total: Non-Muslims and Muslims 11,53,500

Even if the whole population of all the communities in the district, excluding the Muslims, is taken into account, the Muslim population exceeds [that] by 26,300 persons; hence there is no justification for the inclusion of Gurdaspur district in the Hindu-Sikh demand.

The Sikh-Hindu demand for the division of the Punjab beyond the River Ravi is also not justified since many Muslim-majority districts of the province lie east and southeast of River Ravi, such as Gurdaspur, Lahore, Montgomery and Multan. What they can claim for a division on the basis of population is the area lying on the east bank of the River Beas. However, I give below a short commentary on the community-wise population in each district of the Hindu-Sikh demand.

Simla—The Hindus represent 57.4 per cent while the Muslims only 18.0 per cent; hence the Muslim claim cannot be argued.

Kangra—The Muslims represent a negligible percentage of only 4.8 against 80.7 per cent Hindus.

Hoshiarpur—The percentage of various communities is as under:

Hindus	35.4
Sikhs	16.9
Scheduled Castes and Ad-Dharmis	14.5
Muslims	32.6
Rest	0.6

The Hindu percentage exceeds by only 2.8 per cent that of the Muslims. Since the Sikhs represent only 16.9 per cent, that is, nearly half of the Muslims, they have got no case at all as a separate community.

Jullundur—The percentage of Caste Hindus and Sikhs comes to 40.3 (13.8 + 26.5) while the Muslim percentage alone is 45.2; hence they (Hindus and Sikhs) cannot claim this district on principle.

Ludhiana—This is the only district where Sikhs form a substantial majority: 41.41 per cent Sikhs, 37.0 per cent Muslims and 13.0 per cent Hindus.

Ferozepore—The Muslims alone represent 45.1 per cent while the Hindus and the Sikhs represent 15.1 per cent and 33.8 per cent respectively. None of these two can claim the district in their individual capacity.

Considering the community-wise percentage for the Ludhiana [Jullundur] Division as a whole, both the communities—Hindus and Sikhs—have got no claim at all for the possession of this Division in their individual capacity. The Muslims represent 34.4 per cent, Hindus 30.0 per cent and Sikhs 24.1 per cent. The position of this Division is the same as is obtaining in Assam. In Assam the Hindu percentage is a bit more than [that of] the Muslims while the percentage of Tribes is a little less than [that of] the Muslims. The same position is prevailing in Ludhiana [*sic* for Jullundur] Division of the Punjab where the Muslims form a majority, the Sikhs are a bit less in percentage than the Muslims, and the Hindus are much more less than the Sikhs. When the Hindus can rule over Assam with a bare majority of 7.6 per cent (41.3–33.7), the Muslims of the Punjab, nay, the Ludhiana [*sic* for Jullundur] Division, representing a majority of 4.4 per cent (34.4–30.0), can also claim the possession of Ludhiana [*sic* for Jullundur] Division.

The claim of the Hindus in Ambala Division is, no doubt, justified on the basis of population because they form a majority of 52.2 per cent in the Division and they represent more than 51.0 per cent in every district of this Division.

A keen study of these two Divisions suggests the possibility whether such conditions prevail anywhere else in the country or not. In view of this, I have tried to present a picture of certain parts in the United Provinces in Table 20.2² to enable the Quaid-i-Azam to make use of it with advantage, if possible.

Now Hindus cannot claim the support of Scheduled Castes since Scheduled Castes are agitating against Hindus practically all over the country. In the UP, they have already started an agitation against the Congress Ministry. Similarly, the Hindus cannot claim the support of the Christians because they have got nothing in common with the Christians while the Christians resemble the Muslims culturally and religiously. As regards the Sikhs, they cannot put their case with the Hindus according to their present position as a separate nation from the Hindus, though small in number, unless and until they merge themselves in Hinduism. All these arguments are put forth because it is not to our advantage to separate Ambala Division from the Punjab and because the Muslims will greatly lose in respect of mineral wealth if they at all agree to forgo Kangra district, the hidden treasure of which is much greater than all the mineral wealth accumulated in the whole of Punjab.

Please refer to UP figures on the following page [Table 20.2]. This indicates that Hindus represent 42.2 per cent in Saharanpur, 51.8 per cent in Muzaffarnagar, 56.9 per cent in Meerut, 45.5 per cent in Bijnor, 46.7 per cent in Moradabad and 57.9 per cent in Bareilly.

When the Sikhs representing only 5.1 per cent in Ambala Division can ask for a separate homeland in the Punjab, the Muslims of UP residing in the above 6 districts representing 31.7 per cent have got a right to claim a homeland in the above 6 districts of UP. Our demand for the northern part of UP is more weighty than the Sikh demand in the Punjab on account of our cultural and linguistic affinity which dominates the populace of these 6 districts over and above the strength of 31.7 per cent population representation.

I regret I cannot provide similar figures for certain other areas of the country for want of time and material which is not with me but I am sure such areas are available in the country particularly in Bihar and Madras.

I hope the Quaid-i-Azam will kindly give a second thought to this short commentary and the 2 tables before forming any conclusion relating to the division of the Punjab. I must reiterate

that by this division the Punjab, rather the Northern Pakistan Zone, will be a greater loser in respect of irrigation, minerals and agricultural resources.

A.R. Khan

¹ Not reproduced here.

² Not reproduced here.

9. Hindus–Sikhs Agree to Partition Punjab

Resolution Adopted by the Working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal, 16 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 120, NMML.

1. Shiromani Akali Dal notes with satisfaction that the Nationalist Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab have fully agreed to the partition of the Punjab. Recent barbarities of the Pakistani Muslims on the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab have left no other solution of the communal tangle except the partition of the Punjab.

Shiromani Akali Dal demands that before the transfer of powers to the Indian hands in June, 1948 the Punjab should be divided into two provinces and for the redistribution of the Provincial boundaries a boundary commission should be set up. The terms of reference whereof should be to demarcate the Provincial boundaries keeping in view:

- (a) Population,
- (b) Landed property,
- (c) Land Revenue, and
- (d) Historical places and traditions of the various communities.

The Shiromani Akali Dal further demands that facilities be provided for exchange of population and property and that special arrangements be made for the protection, honour integrity and sanctity of the historically religious places.

The Shiromani Akali Dal also appeals to all the Panthic organizations and workers to unite and solidly stand behind this demand.

No.71/701

Dated, Amritsar the 19th April, 1947.

Copy Forwarded to His Excellency the Viceroy of India, New Delhi for favour of His Excellency's kind perusal and necessary action in the matter.

Secretary,
Shiromani Akali Dal.

10. 'Ruinous for All Communities'

The Tribune, 19 April 1947.

Lahore, April 18.—'It will be ruinous for all communities to split the province into bits', says Punjab's ex-Premier Malik Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana in a statement today expressing his opposition 'to any scheme involving the partition of the Punjab'.

He says: I had in a press interview, some weeks back, expressed my opposition to any scheme involving the partition of the Punjab. I notice now that a section of the press has doubted

the authenticity of that statement. I have, in fact, on many occasions in the past expressed the view that it will be ruinous for all communities to split the province in to bits. The present Punjab boundaries make the province a self sufficient economic unit. The irrigation system, the electricity scheme and the extensive development programme of the future if torn apart would lead to impoverishing both the western and eastern Punjab.

It will be a catastrophic calamity indeed if this comes about and all sections of the Punjabis should consider its dangerous implications, particularly the Hindus and Sikhs in the west and the Muslims in the east of the Punjab.

11. Create Separate Regional Administration until Partition

Letter from Bhim Sen Sachar to Vallabhbhai Patel, 21 April 1947

SPC, Vol. V, p. 292.

Lajpatrai Bhavan
Lahore

My dear Sardarji,

I beg to enclose for your information and such action as you may deem advisable a copy of the statement issued by the Congress and the Panthic parties in the Punjab Legislative Assembly along with a copy of my covering letter to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Yours sincerely,
Bhim Sen Sachar.

Enclosure

Lahore
21 April 1947.

Dear Panditji,

The enclosed statement has been issued jointly by me and Sardar Swaran Singh, the leader of the Punjab Assembly Panthic Party in the Punjab Legislative Assembly. The statement had the full support of members of the Congress Assembly Party and the Panthic Assembly Party. We shall feel very grateful if you would kindly bring this to the notice of His Excellency the Viceroy provided this suggestion meets with your approval. It appears to me that very early action in the matter is called for.

Yours sincerely,
Bhim Sen

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Vice President
Interim Government
New Delhi

Extract from Joint Statement

To restore responsible government in the province of the Punjab, we demand that as an interim and transitional arrangement, His Excellency the Governor-General should install immediately two or three regional administrations with separate Ministers, under one Governor for the two

or three zones of the existing province of the Punjab. We must make it plain that in the existing circumstances we are not prepared to co-operate with the Muslim League for forming a single Ministry for the whole of the Punjab.

12. 'Ambala Muslims Oppose Partition of Punjab'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 26 April 1947.

Ambala, Friday.

A meeting of the representatives of the District and City Muslim Leagues office of the Ambala Division was held on the April 20, 1947 at Karnal with Chaudri Mohd Hassan MLA, in the chair. The following resolutions were unanimously passed.

That the City and Distt Muslim League representatives as well as the workers of the Muslim League of the Ambala Division are strongly opposed to the suggestion of interested political parties for partition of the Punjab into different zones. The Muslim League representatives of the Amabala division view with suspicion the move of the Hindus for reducing the Muslim majority in the Punjab into a minority by separating Ambala Division from the rest of the Punjab. The Muslim League representatives of this division hope that Qaed-e-Azam will not agree to any proposal which may ultimately prove to be detrimental in the interests of the Muslims of this Division....

13. Attitude of Political Parties Remains Unchanged

Extract from a Letter from Evan Jenkins to Louis Mountbatten, 30 April 1947
IOR, R/3/1/178, Acc. No. 3479, NAI.

Government House, Lahore

Secret
No. 666.

... 6. The attitude of the political parties is unchanged. The Muslim League are still anxious to form a Ministry, a subject on which I have written separately to Your Excellency. The Muslim leaders are as complacent as ever. Daultana recently toured in the Attock district, and there is credible evidence that he told the people in at least one village that if they could stick it out for a fortnight or three weeks, all proceedings against them would be withdrawn, and the officials who have suppressed the disturbances would be given a hot time. There has been no real attempt to approach the Hindus or Sikhs, the Muslim attitude being that the Muslims are entitled to rule the whole of the Punjab and that when this is admitted they will be good enough to treat the non-Muslims with generosity.

The Sikhs are preparing for an offensive. I believe that the leaders would prefer not to launch it until July 1948 or later; but they will find it difficult to control their followers. There are strong rumours of a retaliatory attack by Sikhs on a suburb of Amritsar or some other place with a strong Muslim element. The Sikhs have committed themselves so deeply to the partition of the Punjab that it will be difficult, and perhaps impossible, for them to take a different line.

The Hindus are still in close alliance with the Sikhs, though there are signs that the Sikhs are not anxious for too close a link with the Congress High Command. Officially the Hindus

would like partition, but I am not sure of the attitude of those of them who belong to the Rawalpindi and Multan Divisions.

An agreed partition of the Punjab appears to me virtually impossible. The Sikhs would expect to get the cis-Ravi districts of the Lahore Division and the Montgomery district of the Multan Division, and possibly even the Shiekhupura district across the Ravi. The Muslims on the other hand would not wish to cede the Amritsar district (which has in fact a small non-Muslim majority), and would claim a part of Ferozepore and Jullundur. Indeed most Muslims would be reluctant to part with anything west of the non-Punjabi speaking districts of the Ambala Division. No leader seems yet to have considered the implications and difficulties of partition.

14. Partition of Punjab, Bengal, and Sind Necessary

Letter from Mast Ram Gupta to J.B. Kripalani, 1 May 1947
AICC Papers, File No. G-34/1947, NMML.

To
Acharya Kripalani Esq
IN Congress
President
New Delhi.

Sir,

May I take the liberty to submit few lines for necessary actions:

Divisions of the Provinces of the Punjab, Bengal and Sind is most necessary as Hindus can't work with Muslims. We want cow protection but they say this is against their religion which also teaches them to slaughter Kafirs that is Hindus and Sikhs. Hindus can't progress in any direction if the Provinces are not divided.

Suhrawardy, Prime Minister Bengal and other Muslim Leaders in Punjab are now deceiving the Hindus by saying that division of the said provinces will not be useful for the Hindus and Muslims. This is a ... the Hindus and Sikhs will be very sorry to lose this opportunity which they have got after sacrificing many lives in Frontier and Punjab and in Bengal.

Those who are in favour of United India they are traitors. In the 2nd World War the ratio of Muslim in army was 16 per cent and not 25 per cent according to the ratio of Muslim population in India now when the war is over they demand that Muslim should be 25 per cent in army. In Punjab and Bengal Muslims in all branches are 90 per cent on responsible posts who are playing havoc against Hindus and Sikhs.

There can be no military trainings in schools and colleges which is most necessary. The Hindus can't progress in any way in United India. To please few Muslims in Congress I think you will not make mistake. Hindus can't please the Muslims. In Khilafat days in Turkey Hindus paid one crore rupees for this purpose but Turkey did not help in any way to the Hindu sufferers.

The past mistakes of History should not be repeated by the Hindu Leaders of these days. You can please God but not the Muslim gundas. The remedy is the bullet of guns and not preaching for peace. Kindly inform accordingly to Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawahar Lal Vice President and other Leaders.

Do you think that Muslim army and police will punish the Muslim rioters or will fight against Muslim countries bordering India. You will find in a few years that Afghanistan and

tribes men of frontier will attack India then what will be the use of keeping Muslim Army. By the divisions of Punjab and Bengal the Muslims have gone out of their senses and now are preaching for friendship with no practical proof.

May God keep you ever happy and healthy.

Yours M.O. Servant
Mast Ram Gupta,
Overseer
PO Jagraon
Ludhiana.

15. 'Division a Solution of Despair'

The Tribune, 1 May 1947.

The Congress resolution for division of Punjab has not received that measure of support in various quarters which Congress resolutions usually do, particularly in the nationalist circles, but those who have opposed it have probably not realized the position in which the country finds itself to-day. For the nationalist elements who are wedded to solidarity of India any division proposition on communal basis, strikes at the very principle of solidarity. If one province can be divided, why cannot the country. Division and redistribution on geographical and linguistic basis is understandable but if once the distribution on communal basis starts, then firstly, we accept the Muslim League theme for division of India and secondly we accept communalism as basis of future Indian politics.

Surely the Congress must have been alive to the above reasoning. On the other hand, circumstances as they exist cannot be ignored if a proper solution is to be found. If under the influence of certain reactionary forces and vested interests, a large section of people are misguided into a communal frenzy and cannot see reason, a solution has to be found. The type of solution depends on the time available. It is futile to force a large section of people to something which they do not appreciate. It is better to let people realize their mistake than to force things against their will which may only harden their views to the extent of preventing them to see reason. The time available is too short for long-term solution on the basis of persuasion, pleadings and arguments.

In view of the above conditions in which the country finds itself, what is to be done? The first step is naturally to localize the problem. It is obvious that it will be the majority in any particular area that must decide what shape of things they want for the future. If a majority in a bigger unit think differently from the majority in a smaller unit, how can it force the majority in a smaller unit to agree to its decision, when we accept the principle of self-determination? Again if one unit happens to be in a negative mood how can it be permitted to hold up progress of another unit, big or small? If the majority of North-Western Punjab wishes to remain a part of one group, while the majority of South Eastern Punjab wishes to stay out, why should not the dissenting elements be permitted to do as they like and see for themselves what will suit their interests best. If pleadings and arguments get no response, practical demonstration is the next best method available to make one see reason, but there are two fundamental inaccuracies in an assumption made for theoretical determination of the will of people which only a referendum can give.

It is assumed that census figures are correct which everybody knows to be wrong. The last census operations in Punjab were a big scandal and ultimately figures had to be cooked to get a closer relation with previous census which also happened to be incorrect. No great reliance can, therefore, be placed on these figures. Secondly, it is wrong to assume that all Muslims want Punjab to be an integral part of group B. During the last election, nearly one third of Muslim votes were polled against the League. These people were either against Pakistan, or believed in non-interference in the Punjab matters from outside. It is, therefore, most unfair to such tolerant Muslim elements to assume that their view is the same as that of League.

If Muslim League following amongst Muslims is taken as 66 per cent then in order to give the Muslim League a majority in any particular area, the Muslim population in that area must be $50 \times \frac{3}{2}$ equal to 75%. Again unless a particular community happens to be in a preponderating majority, it is incorrect to think that there will be no tolerant elements having sympathies with the aspirations of the minority community and therefore the policies of the locality will be regulated by the policies of the majority community. If therefore a province has to be divided up, it must be divided in three parts. Two of these will be such that one community is in such great majority that the view of the majority of that country will always prevail, and we have seen that in case of Muslims, such areas will be those where their population is 75 per cent or more. The third portion will be where the Muslims or the non-Muslims do not preponderate and where one can never be sure without a proper plebiscite as to what the will of people will be and whether that will be with such a large majority as to rule out all possibilities of change of general public opinion. Taking into account the inaccuracies of census figures, the three portions of the Punjab work out as below:

- I. Ambala Division and Jullundur Division minus Jullundur and Ferozepore Districts.
- II. Lahore Division plus Jullundur and Ferozepore districts and Montgomery and Lyallpur districts and parts of Multan districts.
- III. Rawalpindi Division plus Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan and Jhang districts.

These boundaries further require to be adjusted so as to conform in geographical limits and be administratively possible. For example, it is impossible for one canal to be operating in two contiguous provinces without creating daily complications.

This will modify the boundaries to

- I East of River Beas.
- II Between Beas and Chenab except south western portion of Doab served by Haveli and Mallsi Canals.
- III West of Chenab plus Haveli and Mallsi areas.

The only alternative solution if the unity of Punjab is to be kept intact is for the Unionist Leaders to come forward and to take control of the situation. The League cult is based on ... and hatred of non-Muslims and their distrust begets distrust. Just as division is no solution similarly the League cult of hatred is negative in nature and leads nowhere. The present atrocities committed in North-Western Punjab has shown the League cult in its nakedness and after all this happening no non-Muslim can have any confidence in League politics or be prepared to co-operate with the League. Therefore the Unionists are the only people who can command co-operation from all sides. Let the Punjab as it is be an entirely independent group, say group D, as distinctly separate from Group B by opting out of group B and having direct

connection with the Centre. If the Unionists whose creed is unity of all Punjabis take up this position they can save the Punjab from division. They will have the support of the Muslims of Eastern Punjab and non-Muslims of Western Punjab and possibly many saner elements of central Punjab. They will not only serve as important links to bring the various communities together and heal their wounds caused by mutual disaffection but may save the Punjab from division which although highly undesirable from higher interests, seems to be the only solution of the present state of tension caused by the inflammatory speeches of fanatics is to continue. If the non-Muslims are ensured of a saner policy tending towards communal harmony they may give up the idea of division altogether because, as will be seen, the division idea is the product of present disturbances and high tension and is merely a solution of despair.

16. Plan for Partition of Punjab

Memorandum from Punjab Representatives in Constituent Assembly to H.L. Ismay,
1 May 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 121, NMML.

Constitution House
New Delhi

Dear Lord Ismay,

We have the honour to submit the accompanying memorandum on the question of the partition of the Punjab for your kind consideration. We trust that you will very kindly place this memorandum before His Excellency the Viceroy and before His Majesty's Government for their kind consideration.

We are submitting this memorandum as representatives from the Punjab to the Constituent Assembly of India.

Yours sincerely,
Gopi Chand Bhargava MLA
Harnam Singh
Tek Chand
Ujjal Singh
Prithvi Singh Azad
Kartar Singh
Harbhaj Ram MLA
Pratap Singh MLA
Suraj Mal MLA
Siri Ram
Diwan Chaman Lall
Members of the Constituent Assembly.

Memorandum by the Punjab Sikh and Hindoo Members of the Constituent Assembly

The terrible happenings in the Punjab have revealed that an organized and well-planned 'Jehad' was preached and carried out against the unoffending non-Muslim minorities, particularly in the Rawalpindi and Multan Divisions of the province. The campaign was inspired by the Muslim

League organization and resulted in the most brutal atrocities that have ever been committed on innocent men, women and children. It has now become impossible for the non-Muslim minorities in the Punjab to accept any Government in the province dominated by Muslim communalists. Impetus was given to those, who indulged in these atrocities, by the 'Direct Action Resolution' passed by the Muslim League under the presidency of Mr M.A. Jinnah, when he made a public declaration that 'the days of constitutionalism are over' and that 'might only can save our rights'. Soon after the 'Direct Action Resolution' was passed, Mr Liaquat Ali Khan and Mr Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Members of the Interim Government and Mr Feroz Khan Noon, an ex-Member of the Executive Council and formerly High Commissioner of India, openly preached the creed of violence. All this resulted in a regular holocaust of murder, loot, arson, abduction, rape and forcible conversion in which thousands of innocent lives of members of the minority communities were lost and unheard-of atrocities were committed. Such a state of affairs cannot be described as riots or communal fracas. It was an entirely one-sided and systematic attack, in which innocent members of the Hindu and Sikh communities were caught unawares and, being defenceless, were butchered or burnt alive in a manner unknown even in the darkest days of human history. Property worth crores of rupees was looted or wantonly destroyed. And, significantly enough, these happenings did not elicit even one word of condemnation from the leaders of the Muslim League!

The terrible happenings of March 1947 have rendered homeless a large number of Hindu and Sikh inhabitants of the demarcated parts of the province, with the result that they have to find their homes in areas where the Hindus and the Sikhs are strong enough to meet the Muslim menace. Thousands of them are migrating to Central and Eastern Punjab and have no desire to go back to their homes.

The non-Muslim minorities under the circumstances are of the view that the only solution of the Punjab problem is an immediate division of the Punjab. They feel that their honour, lives and property cannot be safeguarded unless the Province is divided into two parts on the lines suggested below:

The total area of the British Punjab (inclusive of what are at present 'Partially exclusive areas' in Kangra District and Dera Ghazi Khan District, is 99089 square miles, vide page 2 Census Report of India of 1941 Vol. VI (Punjab). We suggest that the division of the Province should be made in such a way that each part comprises nearly one-half of this area and that the dividing line should be along the river Chenab where it enters British territory in Sialkot District. The part of the East and South of the proposed dividing line will comprise the Ambala, Jullundur, and Lahore Divisions with one of the colony districts of Lyallpur or Montgomery.

More than three-fourths of the urban immovable Punjab is owned by non-Muslims. This is clear from the indication of taxation on urban immovable property in the province.

The total land revenue of the Punjab in 1931 when the Punjab Government collected the figures community-wise for the use of the Simon Commission was Rs 4,38,13,977. Out of this sum the non-Muslims paid Rs 2,18,44,913. This is approximately 50 per cent of the total land revenue of the province. These figures have not been revised subsequent to 1931 but it is a well known fact that the change in ownership since 1931 has been in favour of the non-Muslims. Thus taken as a whole, the non-Muslims own considerably more than 50 per cent of the rural and urban property in the Province.

In view of the above facts the conclusion is inevitable that the demand of the non-Muslims of the Punjab to at least half the area of the Punjab is eminently just. The proposed non-Muslim

province will comprise an area of about 49000 square miles which is one half of the total area of the province.

We have suggested the above basis for the partition of the Punjab for the following reasons:

- (a) The demarcation on the above basis satisfied the linguistic requirements. Punjabi is the language of the people East of the Chenab, whereas the language of the people in the proposed Muslim province is Lehndi-Multani. For a detailed discussion on this subject reference may be made to the 'Linguistic Survey of India' by Dr Sir George Grierson, KCIE., ICS., Vol.IX, Part 1, page 608.
- (b) In the event of partition, exchange of property and population will have to take place as considered necessary by Mr M.A. Jinnah also. That being so, the property basis of partition will be the most suitable. An examination of the agricultural life of the province will show that all the essential interests of the Sikhs are in the tract East of the Chenab. The Muslims in Gurdaspur District number 51 per cent according to the last Census but out of the total annual land revenue of the district which is Rs 17,77,562 the Muslims pay Rs 6,16,193 only as against Rs 11,61,369 paid by the non-Muslims. In Lahore District the Muslims though 60 per cent of the population, pay Rs 483,448 per annum as land revenue whereas the non-Muslims pay Rs 9,36,007. In the matter of agricultural holdings, the position of non-Muslims is much stronger than that of Muslims in the Shiekhupura district and other parts of Lahore division.
- (c) The Cabinet Mission in the Statement of May 16 examined this question of the partition of the Punjab with care and they came to the conclusion that 'a radical partition of the Punjab would divide the Sikhs, leaving substantial bodies of Sikhs on both sides of the boundary and would not provide an acceptable solution for the communal problem'. They apparently had in view the division of the province on the basis of districts having a bare Muslim or non-Muslim majority. The Muslims by reason of the recent disturbances have, however, made the partition of the Punjab an absolute necessity and in this partition care has to be taken that a major portion of the Sikhs and other minorities is provided a home in the non-Muslim part of the province. According to our suggestions, the population of the various communities in the non-Muslim Province will approximately be as under:

1. Sikhs	33,00,000
2. Indian Christians	3,75,000
3. Scheduled Caste & Adharmis	14,50,000
4. Hindus	52,00,000

This will afford real protection to the various minorities and will also obviate the difficulties envisaged by the Cabinet Mission in para 7 of the Statement.

- (d) The property owning population is rooted in the soil of the province. The other population is floating. The census operations of the Punjab were always conducted during the winter months of the year. The Census Reports bring out that during those months, Powindahs, Baluchis, Pathans and Kashmiris in lakhs migrate from Baluchistan, Tribal area and Gilgit in the Punjab and they are included among the Muslim population of the Province. The basis suggested by us is the only proper basis because the population of the Punjab which is floating is more easily transferable.

The basis of partition suggested above is equally just to the Muslims. The density of population in the proposed non-Muslim province of the Punjab is 445 persons per square mile as against 235 persons per square mile in the proposed Muslim province of the Punjab. The projects for irrigation that have recently been launched in the proposed Muslim province will irrigate an area of more than 2 million acres of land which alone will absorb an additional population of at least one million persons, who will necessarily migrate from the Central Districts of the Punjab. Further, the proposed Muslim province is so thinly populated, that it can very easily absorb several lakhs of the floating population of the Punjab that at present inhabits the proposed non-Muslim part of the province.

The scheme of partition will of necessity take into consideration the capital investments on the irrigation projects and the value of the unallotted crown lands in the Punjab. According to our scheme of partition the proposed non-Muslim province will get about 33 per cent while 67 per cent of the above will fall to the share of the proposed Muslim province.

We may further mention that in the division proposed by us, most of the mineral resources that exist in the Punjab will fall to the proposed Muslim province. The oilfields and the oil refineries of the Punjab are situated in Rawalpindi Division and so are the coal fields and salt mines. The raw material for heavy chemicals like gypsum and limestone are to be found on a large scale in the Muslim zone and the only heavy chemical factories, manufacturing soda-ash and chlorine etc. and all the cement factories in British Punjab are situated in Jhelum and Attock districts.

Before concluding, we may refer to another mode for the partition of the Punjab suggested in some quarters. According to that suggestion, the partition is to be on the basis of districts having a bare Muslim and non-Muslim majority as returned in the Census of 1941. That this will not be a just basis is in the first place evident from the Census reports. The census figures have been challenged by non-Muslims time and again and their inaccuracy is admitted by the Census Commissioner of India and the various Census Superintendents of the Punjab as is apparent from the quotations given in the appendix. The non-Muslims maintain that the Muslims and non-Muslims are almost equal in numbers in the Punjab. They contend that the Muslim figures have been swollen by reason of the influx of temporary immigrants during winter months when the census enumerations took place. The division of the Punjab on population basis will, as envisaged by the Cabinet Mission in para. 7 of the Report, divide the Sikhs into two halves and would not afford an acceptable basis for the solution of the communal problem. The division district-wise on population basis would not give to the non-Muslims even that much area to which they are entitled strictly according to their proportion in the population, that is, 43 per cent of the aggregate area of the province, which comes to 42,108 square miles. If population alone is to be the criterion then the non-Muslim province should consist of Ambala and Jullundur divisions of the Punjab and the Lahore Division minus Gujranwala District. The handing over to the non-Muslims, those districts only, in which there is a decided non-Muslim majority, would neither give them the area they are entitled to out of the total area of the Punjab, nor afford them any scope for expansion, nor provide any practicable method for the exchange of property or population. Such a division would adversely affect the Sikhs whose population would be divided half and half in the two proposed provinces. Besides, the non-Muslim province so formed would be a deficit province and being thickly populated will offer no scope for development as all the colony areas will be included in the Muslim Province. Indeed, the line of demarcation suggested by us in this memorandum would be the only equitable line of Division.

The proposals we have made may be summarized as follows:

- (a) The Punjab should be divided.
- (b) A Boundary Commission should be appointed.
- (c) *Inter alia*, the following should be the instructions given to the Boundary Commission:
 - (i) The division of the Punjab should be on the property basis.
 - (ii) While drawing the demarcation line, the necessity of keeping the major part of the Sikh population in a homogeneous area should be kept in view.
 - (iii) The division should be such that one of the colony districts of Lyallpur or Montgomery is included in the non-Muslim province. The adoption of this principle will facilitate the exchange of property and population.
- (d) Pending final arrangements, two Cabinets may be set up for the administration of the Punjab, one for the Ambala, Jullundur and Lahore divisions and the other for Rawalpindi and Multan Divisions. If for any reasons the above suggestion cannot be put into force forthwith, we suggest that the Lahore Division may be administered during the interim period by a joint Cabinet consisting of equal number of Muslims and non-Muslims.

- 1. Sardar Ujjal Singh, MLA.
Willington Mall, Lahore.
- 2. Sardar Harnam Singh, Advocate,
Lahore.
- 3. Giani Kartar Singh, MLA,
Lyallpur.
- 4. Sardar Pratap Singh, MLA,
Amritsar.
- 5. Bakshi Sir Tek Chand.
Retired Judge, High Court, Lahore.
- 6. Diwan Chaman Lall, MLA (Central)
Lahore.
- 7. Dr Gopi Chand Bhargav, MLA,
Lahore.
- 8. Choudhry Harbhaj Lal, MLA,
Lyallpur.
- 9. Mr Prithvi Singh Azad, MLA,
Ambala.
- 10. Rai Bahadur Choudhry Suraj Mal, MLA,
Hisar.
- 11. Pandit Siri Ram Sharma, MLA,
Rohtak.

17. 'Punjab Hindu Sabha Supports Partition'

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 3 May 1947.

Lahore, May 3.—The Executive Committee of the Punjab Provincial Hindu Sabha at its meeting reiterated its opposition to the partition of India and demanded that if through the

intercession of the Government some provinces were to be torn away from the Centre, then in their opinion the provinces of Punjab and Bengal must be partitioned on the condition that the portfolios of law and order along with defence must remain with a Union Centre in order to make the recrudescence of the fanatical outburst impossible and to inspire confidence among all sections of the people. Bhai Parma Nandji presided.

The Sabha asked the Hindus in a resolution 'to answer the clarion call of the Hindu Mahasabha to gather under its banner to save Hindu culture, and civilization by establishing a network of Hindu Sabhas all over the province enrolling members and contributing liberally to its funds...'.²

18. Communities Unlikely to Cooperate on Partition

Letter from Evan Jenkins to Louis Mountbatten, 3 May 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 121, NMML.

Government House, Lahore,

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Your Excellency may be interested in the enclosed note of an interview¹ I had yesterday with Sardar Swaran Singh, Sardar Harbans [Harnam] Singh, and Lala Bhim Sen Sachar. Sardar Swaran Singh, as Your Excellency may remember, was Development Minister in the Punjab and is now prominent in Sikh politics. Sardar Harbans Singh is an Advocate, originally of the Rawalpindi District, and is a Member of the Constituent Assembly. Lal Bhim Sen Sachar was our Finance Minister. Characteristically the three gentlemen did not mention to me the proceedings or intentions of the Hindu and Sikh 'Convention' which recently met at Delhi. They left me to see in this morning's newspapers that this 'Convention' had demanded the partition of the Punjab with the Chenab as the western boundary between the two States. The non-Muslim State must, according to the 'Convention', include the whole of the Ambala, Jullundur and Lahore Divisions, and one colony district from the Multan Division.

2. This partition business seems to me to be getting out of control. The present position may be stated as follows:

- (1) We could partition the Punjab (a) by force in pursuance of an award by HMG, or (b) amicably in pursuance of an agreement between the communities.
- (2) Course (a) would require the use of a very large body of troops and is for this reason alone impracticable. It would in any case be a difficult and unpleasant course, resulting in the establishment of two Governments which would be compelled to rule by massacre.
- (3) Course (b) has so far held the field, and until a few days ago it seemed that if Pakistan were conceded, Jinnah would instruct his followers to accept a reasonable partition. The attitude of the Hindus and Sikhs has never been certain, but there was a chance that if the Muslims met them half-way, they would be reasonable.
- (4) The situation has been radically changed by Jinnah's public announcement that Pakistan must include the whole of the Punjab (he would probably agree to the severance from the Punjab of a part at least of the Ambala Division, but this does not affect the main issue). The Hindus and Sikhs, particularly the latter, have countered with the most extravagant claims and are certainly not prepared to agree to the inclusion of the whole of the Punjab in Pakistan or to any reasonable partition. Their claim to

the whole of the Lahore Division may be a bluff, but they would, I am sure, refuse to accept any boundary short of the Ravi, and they would insist on the inclusion in the non-Muslim State of a considerable colony area, possibly an entire district.

- (5) It is thus clear that we are not going to succeed in course (b). There will not be an amicable partition in pursuance of an agreement between the parties, and if we are not very careful, we shall be manoeuvred into giving an award which we shall be unwilling or unable to enforce.

3. In these circumstances I think that Your Excellency should reconsider the terms of any early announcement embodying a solution of the Indian political problem. In the Punjab we are going to be faced with a complete refusal of the communities to co-operate on any basis at all. It would clearly be futile to announce a partition of the Punjab which no community would accept. The announcement would be regarded as an award which all three communities would dare us to enforce, and I have no doubt that all three communities would begin instantly to fight among themselves. We cannot get away from the basic facts—that Jinnah wants the whole of the Punjab, and that the Hindus and Sikhs will insist that he is not to have more than two-fifths of it. There can be no peaceful solution without a complete change of front by all communities, and unless Your Excellency sees some prospect of such a change, I think we must begin to consider very seriously what *ad hoc* arrangement can be made for the transfer of power. I have not been able to think of any suitable arrangement—failing communal agreement there can be no orderly representative Government here; and failing orderly representative Government there is no satisfactory successor.

Yours sincerely,
E.M. Jenkins

¹ Note not reproduced here.

19. 'Partition on Basis of Landed Property—Master Tara Singh's Demand'

The Tribune, 4 May 1947.

Lahore, May 3.—In a statement issued this evening, Master Tara Singh, the veteran Akali leader says that the only basis for a peaceful settlement in the Punjab is a division demarcating the two parts on the basis of immovable property held by the Muslims and non-Muslims.

Following is the full text of the statement:

'It is rumoured that the Punjab is being divided into eastern and western parts on the basis of mere population of the districts and not on the basis of population of Muslims and non-Muslims in the province as a whole. This gives the Muslims 65 per cent of land though at present they own less than 50 per cent of it.

'Mr Jinnah pleads for the exchange of population. It is clear that he is convinced that the life and property of the minorities will not be safe in the Pakistan area. Transfer of populations from one part of the country to another is impossible on account of the climatic, linguistic and cultural difficulties. But exchange of population within a province is quite practicable, particularly in the Punjab, where climate and language are the same practically throughout the province. Therefore I agree with Mr Jinnah that so far as the Punjab is concerned exchange

of populations is the only permanent solution of our present difficult problems. Exchange of population is not the same thing as immigration and emigration, but it clearly implies exchange of property as well. Therefore, the partition of the Punjab must be based on considerations of the population of Muslims and non-Muslims and the property held by them.

‘Mr Jinnah seems to be anxious to maintain the integrity of the Sikhs, but he is not anxious to maintain their independence. All he wants is that the Sikhs should remain together under his heel. He roundly accuses the Sikhs for allowing themselves to be used by the Congress. Is it because the Congress accepts that the Punjab is the homeland of the Sikhs? Is it because the Congress is one with the Sikhs in maintaining the integrity and independence of the Sikhs? Is it because it sympathizes with the aspirations of the Sikhs to be free from communal domination?’

‘As compared with the above and leaving aside the past history, the recent experience that the Sikhs have had, has convinced them that it is impossible, under the present circumstances, to submit to any communal domination with the certain knowledge of being exterminated. No paper safeguards can obliterate the lessons and practical experience.

‘I would request Mr Jinnah to give up this hypocritical role of being a friend of the Sikhs.

‘But after June, 1948, when the British are gone and if Pakistan is established, the lot of the minorities can only be imagined than described. We are, therefore, inevitably driven to the conclusion that division of the Punjab demarcating the two parts on the basis of the immovable property held by the Muslims and non-Muslims is the only basis for a peaceful settlement. In demanding this we do not seek any favour from anybody. We want only our right to live as a free people.’—API

20. Increasing Demand for Plebiscite

Letter from S. Tarlok Singh to I.D. Scott, 5 May 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 121, NMML.

D.O. No. F.7(4) 47
External Affairs Department
New Delhi

My dear Scott,

Pandit Nehru has been receiving a large number of telegrams everyday in regard to the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Lately the number of these telegrams has been anything from 100 to 200. Many of the telegrams come from Gurdaspur District which has, as you know, a very narrow majority of one community over the rest. It is of course clear that there are very strong feelings on the subject. In particular, the need for the plebiscite is being stressed a great deal. Pandit Nehru has asked me to let you have this information and also to enquire whether you would like me to pass these telegrams to you.

Yours sincerely,
Tarlok Singh
Private Secy to Pandit J.L. Nehru.



21. 'Harijans Want Partition of Punjab'

The Tribune, 6 May 1947.

New Delhi, May 4.—The definite assertion that if partition of the Punjab is not effected along the river Chenab, nearly 5 lakh Harijans out of the total of 17 lakhs in the whole of the Punjab would be forced to live in Pakistan was made by a deputation of Punjab Scheduled Castes representatives who waited on Mr Jagjivan Ram, Labour Member, Interim Government, yesterday.

Stressing the fact that partition of the Punjab was in the interest of the Scheduled Castes, the deputationists requested Mr Jagjivan Ram to place this view-point of theirs before the Viceroy and members of the Congress Command.

Messrs P.R. Thakur, Radhanath Da and Ashutosh Mullick, Scheduled Castes representatives from Bengal in the Constituent Assembly also met the Labour Member yesterday and had detailed discussions with him regarding the position of Scheduled Castes in the event of the division of the Punjab and Bengal.—United Press.

22. PPCC Resolution on Partition of Punjab

Letter from General Secretary, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, to General Secretary, AICC, 6 May 1947

AICC Papers, File No. P-14, Part II, 1947-48, NMML.

To,

General Secretary,
AICC Swraj Bhawan,
Allahabad.

Dear friend,

The General meeting of the PPCC in its meeting held on 4-5-47 passed unanimously the attached resolution on the partition of Punjab.

It will be highly appreciated if this office is kept informed regarding further developments and instructions in this connection.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,
L.S. Sethi,
MLA
General Secretary.

Resolution

The Punjab Provincial Congress Committee reiterates its strong faith in the geographical political and ethnological unity of India, maintenance of which is the prime necessity of the moment so that in context of present international setting India may play her rightful role. Without this unity it would be impossible to defend the country against foreign aggression and develop it industrially and economically.

As a first requisite to the preservation of this unity there should be a strong Centre. As [*sic*] anaemic and weak centre would encourage fissiparous tendencies and will lead to industrial,

economic and cultural impoverishment of the country. Present events in the various parts of the country have already demonstrated that even communal riots and such other disturbances cannot be effectively checked by a Central Government which is powerless to interfere in the Provincial affairs.

The Committee further maintains that separate electorates are the direct cause of the present communal hatred and estrangement and therefore should be replaced by joint electorates with adult franchise, with or without reservation of seats for minorities in the future constitution of the Indian Union and of all its component parts.

This committee while welcoming HMG's decision of transferring power to Indians by June, 1948, places its protest on record against that clause of H.M. Government's statement of February, 20, 1947, which says, 'That it may transfer power even to the Government of some of the existing provinces as it has proved a source of encouragement to the disruptive forces working against the unity of India'.

The same has further encouraged the Muslim League to resort to non-constitutional and violent methods to grab power in the Punjab, NWFP and other places. Therefore in the interest of the unity of this country this committee demands that power be transferred to a strong Central Government.

This committee while believing in the unity of the Punjab is of the opinion that the unity of India is more fundamental and necessary. But if the division of India becomes inevitable and inescapable because of the reactionary, negative and anti-national and undemocratic stand of the Muslim League, then in view of the present happenings, the part of the Punjab which desires to remain in the Indian Union is fully entitled to exercise its inalienable right to do so. With respect to the demarcation of the division line, which matter, this committee leaves to the discretion of the Congress High Command.

23. Sikhs Unsafe under Muslim Domination

Telegram from Tara Singh, Baldev Singh, and Swaran Singh to Listowel, 7 May 1947

TOP, Vol. X, p. 660.

Lahore

After brutal happenings in Western Punjab no Sikh or Hindu's honour, life or property safe under Muslim domination in existing Punjab. Therefore division of Punjab alone can provide safety and homeland for Sikhs who ruled Punjab before British and whose historical and economic position entitles them to special consideration. The proposal to make only twelve eastern districts as homeland for Sikhs and Punjab Hindus causing consternation. This division unfair and unjust as these districts compromise only thirty five per cent area as against fifty per cent property and forty three per cent population of Sikhs and Hindus of Punjab. This proposal heaviest blow to Sikhs as it carves already small community into two halves and deprives them of entire canal colony areas developed mainly through their efforts and enterprise. Proposed Eastern Province has extremely low disproportionate share of provincial assets providing no scope for exchange of population and property. The proposal mutilates whole system of upper Bari Doab canal. We demand division of Punjab along river Chenab with provision for exchange of population and property. Thus alone can integrity and solidarity of Sikhs and their holdings be preserved and equitable distribution of provincial assets assured. Any interim arrangement

inconsistent with this demand extremely prejudicial to Sikhs and will be resisted. We remind Britain of its repeated pledges to the Sikhs. Now is the time to redeem them.

Master Tara Singh, Baldev Singh, Swaran Singh.

24. 'Patiala Pleads for Separate Province for Jats'

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 7 May 1947.

Ferozepore, May 5.—'If in the new constitution of India, territorial redistribution becomes inevitable, I shall fully support the demand of the Jats for the formation of a Jat Province.

'The Britishers have announced to transfer power to Indian hands and it is for us now to grasp the opportunity. It is only as partners of the United India that the Indian Princes can find approach. Now is the time that all States must join the Constituent Assembly.' Thus observed His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala while addressing more than 20,000 sturdy Jats of Haryana at the annual function of the All-India Jat College, Rohtak, last evening.

Besides others, the Maharaja of Bharatpur State, Hon'ble Sardar Baldev Singh, Defence Member in the Interim Government, Gyani Kartar Singh, S. Ishar Singh, Majhail and Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke, were present.

The Raja of Bharatpur in his speech stressed the need for unity among the Jats....

25. 'Sikhs Shall Be Doomed in a Divided Punjab—Mamdot'

Dawn, 7 May 1947.

Lahore, Tuesday.—Khan Iftikhar Hussain Khan of Mamdot, President of the Punjab Muslim League commenting on Master Tara Singh's demand for the partition of the Punjab on the basis of immovable property said today that the Sikh leader's abrupt departure from the universally accepted principle of partition on population basis clearly indicated that the Sikhs had now started assessing the disastrous consequences accruing to their community from a division of the Punjab.

'The latest statement of Master Tara Singh', he said in an interview with the API 'exhibits a sense of realization on his part that the Sikhs shall be doomed for ever in a divided Punjab. As they shall not only pass under the perpetual domination of the Hindu majority in eastern Punjab but shall also lose all their economic stake in the west'.

'The latest demand for the partition of the Province on property basis is in reality nothing more than a subterfuge to wriggle out of the awkward position created by their own sentimentality worked up to a high pitch by sinister Congress designs. The Sikhs too know it that no one is going to take it seriously, but it may create the necessary ground for a stepping back'.

Faulty Leadership

The Khan of Mamdot said that the cry for the division of the Punjab was raised by the Sikh leaders to serve as milk-sop for their enraged followers who had been misled into uncalled for misery and suffering through their faulty leadership.

They very much expected from the sympathetic Congress that it would recognize their permanent hegemony in the new eastern province of the Punjab by agreeing to the appointment

of Sikh Premier for all time or by allowing the Patiala State to swell out and extend its tentacles [*sic*] over the adjoining territories so as to expand it into a homeland for the Sikhs.

But it appeared that both the proposals had been rejected by the Congress and hence the change of position by the Sikhs.

United Punjab

'I personally believe,' the Khan of Mamdot said, 'that it will not be long before the Sikhs come round to support a united Punjab. They know that the Muslims will resist to the last any encroachment on the integrity of the Pakistan areas and they also realize that the partition of the Punjab will only benefit the Hindus who are in a majority in the eastern districts.'

'The future of 37 lakhs of Sikhs lies in consolidation of their position in one province and not in raising permanent barrier between their own ranks reducing them to humble minorities on either side of it.'—API.

26. Sikh Demand for a Separate Constituent Assembly

Extracts from a Letter from Major Short to Stafford Cripps, 8 May 1947

TOP, Vol. X, pp. 693–6.

My very dear Sir,

Baldev has written again. Attached....

But the rest, and the fact he has written again and so soon, makes me feel the Sikh is beginning to *feel* neglected—I don't doubt unjustly. But *if* he is, then I don't doubt he is due to go off with the worst bang we've yet had, and entangle all, and most of all us, with the shambles. Of course it is for Congress and the League to remove this feeling of neglect. But *they* only can if the Sikh feels *we* are urging them to remove it, *and are keeping the Sikhs in the swim of what's afoot*.

However, that is a matter of opinion. What is a matter of fact is that Baldev says he agrees with the views of Sant Singh. Considering Baldev's hold over the Sikhs (proved by recent events, or they'd not have been so quiet); and that Sant is the wisest, sanest, and most moderate of any Sikh known to me, it may be useful to you now to know what those view are....

Enclosure 1

Sardar Baldev Singh to Major Short

1 Bhagwan Das Road, New Delhi

1 May 1947

My dear Bill,

...I hope the letter that I wrote to you the other day was clear. Things are moving fast here. Whether any settlement will be possible, I do not know. What I am concerned at present with is the future of my community. You will remember the assurance the Members of the Cabinet Mission and everybody else gave us of a fair deal for Sikhs. This is the time of the assurance to be fulfilled. In fact it is now or never. I hope therefore that you will do your best and persuade your friends to leave no stone unturned to help us.

Sant is here and I agree with what he writes, as the minimum that Sikhs can be expected to accept. Needless to say that it will also help people of my way of thinking who are so keen on building up cordial relations between England and India.

There is not the least doubt in my mind that some British officials here who still live in the past are doing a tremendous lot of harm to the future relations between our countries. They belong to the old diehard school and are doing their best to put the Labour Government in a very awkward position. I told you this when I was in London. Subsequent events have proved what I then said. It is a high time that the Labour Government were made aware of this unfortunate element in India, for not until the officials co-operate fully in the new policy, will worthwhile results be reaped. Anyway it is clear that these diehards must be ignored and put in their place when final decisions are being framed.

I depend on you to give us the best support you can.

Yours sincerely,
Baldev Singh.

Enclosure 2

Sardar Sant Singh to Major Short

Nabha, Punjab, India.
26 April 1947

My Dear Friend,

Many thanks for your two letters.... Facts are: For 27 years or more religious democracy has been preached and practiced senselessly by the rulers and the ruled. Under the stress of circumstances mostly created by the two Great Wars the rulers perforce leaned more and more towards religious minorities. Alterable political majorities and minorities elsewhere in democratic countries have been grafted here on religion, thus losing all chance for conversion of political thought and opinion and thereby a majority into a minority. I believe every Englishman in the political field knows this fact. But instead of starting this country anew he sent the first consignment in the shape of Communal award and then the declaration 'Indians should frame their own Constitution' knowing too well that the gulf was wider than the Atlantic ocean. My friend, I believe in Transmigration and Karma and you in Action and Reaction. In my conception, it is impossible to escape from Reaction—except through prayer in matters spiritual and through happening in matters secular. It was for this very reason that I readily answered Pakistan and Khalistan last year and not because these were good for those who asked for them and for our friends of the Commonwealth.

So much for the diagnosis. Now the village Hakim's prescription.

Division and Partition be accepted in principle. If 562 states can exist on the map there is room for 15 instead of 11 Provinces. Boundary Commissions to be set up later. Let Muslims and Non-Muslims including or excluding Sikhs sit in their own Constituent Assemblies. The Sikhs may have their own C.A. if they so choose. Let these bodies prepare paper Constitutions. It will be interesting to see how each C.A. handles such questions as Defence, F.A., Communications, Finance, Planning and above all the problem of Minorities and Franchise. Each C.A. to produce this paper Constitution within six months with or without the help of others and then it should appoint a negotiation body to resolve the points of difference in 15 days. Amended

Constitutions should be put to a referendum to the different Communities both in the majority and minority Provinces. If 25 per cent of the majority Community votes against and 66 per cent of the minority Community do not accept the draft Constitution, it should be considered lost. The ballot to be secret under U.N.O. All this to be completed by February 48. Some such step will bring the vainglorious Leaders on the practical plane while their past Commitments to their followers will be redeemed and their personal egoism satisfied.

I have written to Mr Moon and hope to keep it up.

Weather is warming up here. Communal tension is indescribably intense and I will not be able to get away to the hills this season.

With kindest regards to you all.

Yours sincerely,
Sant Singh.

27. No Hope for Agreement

Telegram from Evan Jenkins to Listowel, 9 May 1947
Lionel Carter (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 175–6.

Lahore

Immediate
No. 87-G.

Your telegram Nos. 5961 and 59(?65) May 9th. For Ismay from Governor of the Punjab. Detailed comment is impossible because I do not know (A) whether options are exercisable by electorate, separate sections of legislature (?or) (?representatives) elected by (?separate) sections of legislature as in original plan and (B) provisional boundary to be included in appendix.

[2.] In the Punjab transfer of power can be made only in one of following three ways. First. An arrangement between communities as to successor authority or authorities. Agreement need not be absolute but must have public support of Moslem League and Congress and of Sikh leaders. Second. In pursuance of award by HMG which we are prepared to enforce. Third. By appointment of *ad hoc* successor authority which would in fact mean abandonment of the Punjab.

3. There is in my judgement now no hope of agreement on these or any other partition proposals. Whatever Jinnah may say in private he has declared publicly for united Punjab as part of Pakistan and Sikhs are making extravagant claims which may be modified but will not be abandoned. Announcement even in terms now contemplated will be treated as an award under which we shall be expected to enforce provisional boundary and to procure appointment of Boundary Commission. If as I suppose provisional boundary runs between Moslem and non-Moslem majority districts it will satisfy nobody and HMG will have to choose between cancelling announcement or using force on a large scale for an indefinite period. We may rapidly find ourselves driven to third method which would be (?positive) disaster.

4. Assuming that announcement is made in terms now contemplated I would expect boycott of all proceedings by Moslems and Sikhs and partly by Hindus also. Moslems would not want (?any) partition and Sikhs would not be satisfied with provisional boundary based on Moslem and non-Moslem majority districts. Hindus would probably follow Sikhs.

5. Punjab situation is explosive and at the moment I can see no credible way out. But I am quite sure that we must avoid an announcement (?on which) there is no agreement. Much will depend on Viceroy's final discussion with leaders. I hope to give my views to Viceroy in greater detail on Sunday May 11th.

Repeated to Viceroy and P.S.V., New Delhi.

28. Partition Is the Only Alternative

Letter from Stafford Cripps to Clement Attlee, 10 May 1947
TOP, Vol. X, p. 741.

Board of Trade, Millbank, S.W.I,

My dear Prime Minister,

As you know I have been and am very worried about the Punjab part of our plan. I send you in confidence Billy Short's latest letter and enclosures. May I have them back when you have digested them.

I think we have gone a long way to meet Sant Singh's point of view which is apparently also Baldev's but we must remember that the Sikhs can bust this arrangement as well as Jinnah! If we were to adopt Dickie's last alternative and hand over the Punjab to the Muslims that would mean immediate civil war. We must in the last resort divide out the Sikhs somehow or we shall never get through.

Yours,
Stafford

29. Congress Should Take Harder Stand on Partition of Punjab

Letter from Baldev Singh to J.B. Kripalani Forwarding His Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru,
10 May 1947
AICC Papers, File No. G-34/1947, NMML.

Personal & Secret

1 Bhagwan Dass Road,
New Delhi.

My dear Kripalani,

I enclose herewith a copy of a letter which I have addressed to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Yours sincerely
Baldev Singh

Enclosure

1 Bhagwan Dass Road,
New Delhi.
May 7th, 1947.

During my interview with the Viceroy yesterday afternoon he discussed with me my letters to him, copies of which I have already sent you. Earlier in the day I had received a letter from

him. I enclose its copy. In our talk he explained to me the position as he now seems to have planned regarding the partition of the Punjab. I am quite upset over what he told me as I feel convinced that his plans are bound to go against the interests of the Punjab as a whole and of the Sikhs in particular. It now seems to me that this situation has arisen because the Congress has not pressed our case emphatically enough.

2. Although the Viceroy made it clear that the 'notional division' he is adopting in the first instance is only to create two assemblies for voting purposes on the broad questions of partition or unity and gave the further assurance that it will not prejudice the work of the Boundary Commission. I entertain the gravest fears as to the repercussions such an announcement will create on public mind. The immediate reaction to it will be that the Punjab has in fact been partitioned on the basis of twelve districts in the East and seventeen in the West. It will weigh the scales heavily in favour of the Muslim League which though disingenuously fighting against it will exploit the scheme to demonstrate the injury it inflicts on the Sikh community and thus gain support for non-partition of the province. It will embitter communal relations much worse than now. It will make it impossible to transfer even a part of any of the 17 districts at any later stage for inclusion in the Eastern Punjab. The Boundary Commission is also bound to be influenced by this notional division.

3. I have from the very beginning tried to impress upon you the gravity of the problem of the Punjab, particularly that of the Sikhs and sought Congress support for our case. I have a feeling that sufficient importance has not been attached to it. In fact, I heard it said by Rajaji that if there was to be a division of India, one district or two in the Punjab this way or that, do not really matter. This is most unfortunate. Quite aside from the irreparable injury such an outlook will cause specially to the Sikhs, the implications of even such a truncated Pakistan on the peace and security of India as a whole must not be ignored. I am convinced that the Muslim Leaguers will accept this lesser area not because they will be satisfied but with a view to demoralize the Sikhs and use it as a jumping ground for future aggression. We have seen but a faint picture of these dreaded designs in recent weeks. At this stage it is only we who have suffered. In future much greater areas will be involved. I want you to view the partition of the Punjab from this long range point of view. The only effective check against the evil designs of the League is to prevent the Sikh community being disrupted by cutting away now as much of the Punjab from Pakistan area as possible.

4. Let us examine some consequences of this 'notional division':

(i) The population of the twelve Eastern districts to be separated is:

Muslims	3,853,573
Non-Muslims	7,694,346
Total	11,547,919

When the matter goes to the Boundary Commission, the Muslim League, on finding that it cannot avoid partition, will try to get as much of the Eastern 12 districts as possible into its area. Rajaji's formula had already conceded to the League the contiguous Muslim majority units, even tehsil-wise. The League will cash on it and the Boundary Commission too is bound to be influenced by what has been conceded by an important member of the Congress Working Committee and to some extent by Gandhiji himself. On this basis we are likely to lose in addition the following tehsils out of the 12 districts.

(a) Tehsil Kakonar in Jullundur district where out of population of 1,43,610 only 216,267 are non-Muslims.

- (b) Tehsil Ferozepur in Ferozepur district where out of a population of 298,286 only 129,916 are non-Muslims.
- (c) Tehsil Zira in Ferozepur district where out of a population of 210,819 only 73,233 are non-Muslims, and
- (d) Tehsil Ajnala in Amritsar District where out of 237,049 only 96,110 are non-Muslims.

All these tehsils are contiguous with Eastern Muslim majority districts and will, under Rajaji's formula, have to go to the Eastern Punjab. And if they are so taken away, as I fear they well might, the position of the Eastern Punjab and of the Sikhs particularly, shall be gravely jeopardised resulting in further depletion of Sikh and non-Muslim population in the Eastern districts.

- (ii) Much has happened since Rajaji's formula based on population majorities in districts—whatever its worth—was first propounded. Muslim League, for instance, has since arrogated to itself the role of dictatorship in Indian public life and embarked on a career of unabashed aggression. To meet its claim on the basis of population majorities today is to pander to its threat and practice of brute force, and to expose ourselves to perennial risks of unrest and disorder. We have seen today that even Mr Jinnah's own peace appeal has fallen flat on his followers. If we placate them today particularly in the Punjab, the consequences will be grave for the future peace of India.
- (iii) Along with the forthcoming political announcement it seems the Boundary Commission and its terms of reference will also be announced. The terms of reference, unless now most carefully drawn up, will give an indication of the probable boundary line of the proposed final partition of the Punjab. When these terms are considered by the public in the light of the 'notional division', the entire basis of partition will assume a new perspective. I may be wrong, but I have a lurking fear that it is the intention of the British to drive the Sikhs towards the Muslims in the Punjab, if only—in appearance at present of course to prevent the community being cut into halves. These intentions are not clean. They want the Sikhs to come to terms with the League and to remain in Pakistan. The 'notional division' aims at this perhaps inadvertently. The plan in fact seems to be to both weaken India as well as to keep the Muslim aggression alive. Such a design must be checked at this stage. And this can only be done if the Congress takes a firm stand now. I personally feel that in the interests of the security of India as a whole, you should put the greatest possible pressure on the Viceroy and HMG that in no case will Congress agree to any partition which does not include in the Eastern zone the Divisions of Ambala, Jullundur and the three districts of Gurdaspur, Amritsar and Lahore in Lahore Division. The case can be put in the interests both of the province as well as of the Sikhs who have suffered gravely by Muslim terrorism. The main principle of partition should therefore be to satisfy the Sikhs who, as a community, have a far greater claim on the Punjab than Muslims. The partition should aim primarily at the Sikh case. I have already made this clear in my earlier letters.

5. During my talk with the Viceroy he told me that the Congress had agreed to the partition on the basis of Muslim and non-Muslim majority districts and that it was for this reason he had made his plan for the 'notional division'. If this is so it is quite contrary to the impression I have gained from you, and I do think that no time should be lost to set things right and to let the Viceroy know that his impression was wrong.

6. I may mention here that it is on the basis of this 'notional division' that the Viceroy also proposes to set up the two interim Ministries in the Punjab later on. You can well imagine how the League will consolidate the Western zone in its own interests and entrench itself there as well as confirm the impression that no part of it will ever go to the Eastern Zone.

7. I have referred to the terms of reference of the Boundary Commission. I would like you to see that these terms are not limited only to the basis of population majorities in districts but take into account the Sikh demand that the line of demarcation should be one as would leave as small a percentage of Sikh population as possible in Pakistan area. The basis of total population strengths and property holdings of the non-Muslims in the province as a whole, would here be relevant considerations.

8. In the last paragraph of his letter, the Viceroy refers to what he calls my suggestion and says that he accepts it. The suggestion is not mine. It was the impression I gained, as I said in my earlier letter to him, from my talks with his advisers. The way he has put it, I connect it with what he suggests in the last para of his letter. The Muslim League leaders are now anxious to contact Sikhs leaders. This was hinted at by the Viceroy himself. The move seems to me to force the Sikhs into the lap of the League by presenting to them the picture of the present 'notional division' and to convey that their safety lies only by joining up with Pakistan area. This is a situation I cannot reconcile myself with. I am not prepared to negotiate with any leader of the Muslim League and have made this abundantly clear. Others from my community might however be tempted to do so. In such circumstances it will put me in a very awkward position in the Office I now hold. And if, God forbid, they should by any chance dally with the League, it will mean the end of the desire I have always entertained of drawing my community close to the Congress in the cause of the country we all hold dear. As an individual, I know I am of little consequence. But please do let me frankly state that if you and the Congress do not support me at this crucial stage I will cease to be of any service to you consistent with my convictions and hopes.

30. 'Active Steps Must Be Taken to Avert the Catastrophe of Partition in Punjab—Khan Mohd Ibrahim Burq'

Dawn, 13 May 1947.

Lahore, Monday.—Mian Mohammad Ibrahim Burq, former Education Minister and a Unionist MLA, in a statement to the Press says: 'Now that the question of the division of the Punjab has come to the forefront and is engaging the attention of all thinking Punjabis, it is obvious that there is almost a complete unanimity of Muslim opinion against the cutting up of the Province, it is equally evident that there is a very strong clamour for division from the Hindus and Sikhs combined.

This catastrophe cannot be averted unless we take active steps at this stage to prevent the partition.

It is admitted by all the people who take a serious view of things that it will be highly detrimental to the interests of Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Mr Suhrawardy, the Muslim League Premier of Bengal has declared in unequivocal terms that the Bengalis are one race, they have one language and have many points in common and does not all this apply with equal force to the Punjab.

Have not the Punjabis, over and above this, several other common interests such as highly developed and interlinked system of irrigation and hydro-electric schemes etc, would not all this upset the economic life of the Province, therefore, why should not we get together to settle our differences ourselves as Mr Suhrawardy proposes for his Province.

The common sense of the Punjabis left uninterfered is bound to assert itself and mutual confidence will begin to reappear. That might create an atmosphere to forgive and forget. And why should this be impossible.

I appeal to all the Punjabis to bring about that happy state of affairs in which we worked in the past. If this happens, I am sure of the glorious future for this land of five rivers.'—API.

31. 'Memorandum to Viceroy: Arya Pradeshak Sabha's Demand'

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 15 May 1947.

Lahore, May 12.—On behalf of the 90 lakhs of Arya Samajists, Lala Khushal Chand, President, Arya Pradeshak Pratinidhi Sabha, Punjab has sent the following memorandum to His Excellency Lord Louis Mountbatten, Viceroy of India:

'The growing insistence on the part of the Muslim League to divide India, has led to the further demand for the partition of the Punjab as a way of escape from the yoke of a communal rule. It is my imperative duty, therefore, on the eve of your taking decisions in respect of these demands to convey to your Excellency the wishes and feelings of 90 lakhs of Arya Samajists for the due protection and preservation of the various existing rights and interests of this section and also to urge upon you the necessity of holding the scales of justice even between section and section of India's population.

About seventy-five years ago, when the great Indian reformer Swami Dayandanda Saraswati, whom some Englishmen of this time called the "Martin Luther of India", launched a movement for the regeneration and uplift of the whole world and founded the Arya Samaj for the purpose, it was in the Punjab that the movement struck its roots deeper and grew into a mighty tree. The Punjab today is the main centre of Arya Samaj movement in India to the cause of which hundreds and thousands of people have dedicated their life. The Punjab of Arya Samaj is in the vanguard of every work of social reform and uplift in India.

Our Holy Land

Besides, the ancient history of the Aryas is inseparable from the Punjab. It is on the banks of the Punjab rivers, more particularly on those of the Irawady (Ravi) and the Chandrabhaga (the Chenab), that the great Aryan Rishis in austere purity, chanted the holy Vedic hymns and lived the Vedic life and thus purified the whole earth. And it is from the Punjab that the Light of Vedic truth went forth to the good of mankind the world over. The Punjab therefore, is our Holy-Land.

And Lahore is the holy shrine of our Holy-Land. Because it was in Lahore that the Arya Saraswati Mandir first took shape and came into being as the Dayanand College. It is here, again, that philosophers like Pandit Guru Datt, martyrs like Pandit Lekh Ram, patriots like L. Lajpat Rai and saint-philanthropists like Mahatma Hans Raj lived and worked and sacrificed their lives.

Are the Arya Samajists to be deprived of their holy homeland and their holy city, whatever the pretext? Are they to be stripped of their natural and divine heritage and torn away from all

their ancient spiritual, cultural and social associations which are to them the most sacred and cherished sources of noble inspiration and guidance of life? Are the Arya Samajists to throw away all these or to be dominated only because their number is comparatively smaller?...

It is therefore most important and necessary that those on whom rests the responsibility of taking decisions on the various demands or proposals of the Punjab's partition should consult also the wishes and interests of the Arya Samajists who number about 90 lakhs in India and whose population and life is most intimate and vital to the Punjab of today.... And may we trust that the British Government will be pleased only to take such steps even in regard to the proposals of demarcation of new boundaries as have the support of their consent, whereby their religious beliefs and sentiments will be respected and their social, cultural and financial interests will be adequately protected and safeguarded.'

32. 'Jullundur Division Muslims Resolve to Resist Partition of Punjab at All Costs'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 16 May 1947.

Jullundur, Wednesday.—The Convention of the Muslim legislators representatives of the District and City Leagues and the District Muslim Students' Federations of the Jullundur Division, met here on Saturday last to ventilate their sentiments against the proposed fragmentation of the Punjab....

Mr Zia-ul-Islam, President of the Punjab Muslim Students' Federation, in his presidential address, said that the Muslim League's demand for the partition of India is based on the principle of two nations. This demand of the partition of India is not a demand of the Muslims of the Muslim majority provinces but also a demand of the Muslims of the Hindu majority provinces. If the Hindus of the Muslim majority provinces want to get out of Muslim domination, why should the Muslims in Hindu provinces accept the Hindu domination, he asked.

Exchange of population is therefore absolutely essential for the progress and prosperity of Hindustan and Pakistan. The division of the Punjab, he said, would strike deep at the root of administrative and economic life of the Province, which has been for nearly a century, developed and built up on that basis and grown as such. We cannot tolerate any portion of Punjab and Bengal to be separated because it will make the exchange of population impossible. Above all, the nature of the Punjab Irrigation demands the continuance of administrative and economic unity of the Province...'

Chapter 21. Bengal: United or Divided

1. 'What Do You Think about Partition of Bengal?'

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 23 March 1947.

A controversy has been raging for some time past over the proposed question of partition of Bengal for the creation of separate homeland for Bengal Hindus.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* has been publishing all shades of opinion both in favour of and against the proposition.

In order to make a more correct estimate of public opinion, we have decided to take some sort of a Gallup Poll from among you—our readers.

We put the following question below and earnestly request you to give us your considered view:

Do you want a separate homeland for Bengal Hindus?

If you approve of the creation of a separate homeland for Bengal Hindus, write only 'Yes' against the question; if you don't, write only 'No'.

Please send your reply to J.N.S., *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, City Office, Chowringhee Square, Calcutta, 13, by April 7, 1947.

Name

Present Address.....

Home Address.....

Religion

2. 'Partition of Bengal Is Vitally Necessary: Mr N.R. Sarkar's Appeal to Assembly Members'

Extract from a Report from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 23 March 1947.

.... The text of the statement runs as follows:

The recent demand for the division of Bengal which has come from Bengal Hindus who, at one stage in the history of the Province, had by their unsparing efforts and sacrifices unsettled the 'settled fact' of Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal, has to be viewed in its true perspective and against the background of real facts and circumstances. In my view this demand does not have its genesis in any pre-determined motive to frustrate the Pakistan demand of the Muslims. Even if the Pakistan demand were not there, the very constitutional set-up which the Cabinet Mission's proposals envisage, namely, a loose federation with only control over Defence, Communication, and Foreign Affairs, when viewed against the back-ground of the relation of

powers and forces working in Bengal and the attitude of Bengal Muslims, cannot be said to ensure proper opportunities to the Bengal Hindus for equal and common rights of citizenship, so essential for the social, political or economic development. Bengal Hindus have realized from actual experience in recent years that no matter whether we have a United India on the basis of the Cabinet Mission's proposal or States on the basis of the Muslim League demand for Pakistan, a partition of Bengal is necessary, vitally necessary, if Bengal Hindus are to have any prospects for future growth of their cultural and economic life.

MAJORITY PARTY'S STRATAGEM

'United Bengal', if it is to have any meaning, postulates a feeling of real union between the two outstanding major political elements in the province, namely Hindus and Muslims. So long as this is merely uttered as a slogan without any indication that the majority community is in any way anxious for union or real understanding with the Hindus,—and no tangible indications have been forthcoming yet—Bengal Hindus can never look upon the cry for United Bengal as genuine. In the absence of any such spirit the claim for United Bengal on the part of the majority community can only be construed as a move to retain their hold and influence over a larger area and resources. Their persistence in the two-nation theory and its application in matters of administration through numerous and increasing ramifications of communal preferences cannot but make their appeal for a United Bengal under present conditions appear as almost a farce to Bengal Hindus....

ONLY A FEW INDIVIDUALS BENEFITED

A careful analysis of the events in the history and administration of Bengal under Provincial Autonomy during the last few years will clearly show that the party in power has followed a policy of separatism and division in order to maintain and increase their power and position and to cover up their lack of efficiency so far as real constructive work is concerned. But their separatist communal policy has not, I feel, benefited even the Muslim Community as a whole, although it may have put good sums of money into the pockets of a few individuals, favoured by Government patronage....

If the party in power had been able to develop the resources of the province and to create more openings and opportunities or if they had been able to properly train up men of their own community for the openings that exist, nobody could object to an increasing share being taken by Muslims of such openings and opportunities. The crux of the whole matter, however, is that the ruling party has not so far given indications of having the ability to develop the resources of the province....

'SUICIDAL SELF-SURRENDER'

Even among Hindus there are some, whose opinion is entitled to respect, who have expressed themselves in favour of a United Bengal I do not know what may be the arguments behind this opinion. They have not stated what would be the basis or the ideas and plans for this United Bengal on a real democratic line. If the present atmosphere continues—and what hope is there that it will not?

Then under United Bengal the minority community can never expect to get equal opportunity for its rightful growth and development. In fact, the conclusion is hardly resistible that in such a situation for Hindus to agree to a United Bengal would simply be suicidal self-surrender. I chanced to see the other day a notice that a meeting of Muslim citizens had been

called to consider the Tramway strike situation. It is unthinkable that even the transport strike should be considered to be in any way a matter for separate communal deliberations. So long as such a separate tendency does exist even in fields which cannot, in reason, be regarded as communal, it is hardly possible for all sections of the people to be imbued with an idea of common citizenship over-riding communal distinctions and making for democratic rule.

The opinion has also been expressed that all our problems would solve themselves with the advent of Socialism, but so long as communalism runs rampant it will be a tremendous stumbling block to the attainment of the ideal of socialism. Under the prevailing circumstances the ruling class will only take advantage of slogans like socialism and communism to seek communal advantage for itself....

What, then, is the harm in separating? What is the danger if the predominantly Hindu areas of Bengal separate and form themselves into a distinct administrative unit?...

A SUGGESTION

The task, however, is not easy and the time at our disposal is very short. Therefore, it is essential that we should take immediate steps in a businesslike way. As the very first step, I suggest that the Assembly Members in respect of the Hindu majority areas (in Bengal), which desire and for which it would be practicable to join and form a separate administrative unit, should come together and publish a unanimous, well-reasoned manifesto demanding separation. This initiative is to come [*sic*] from them since it is the present elected members who are also participating in the Constituent Assembly now engaged in the larger task of constitution-making for the whole of India. This public demand of theirs should be forwarded to the Secretary of State, to the new Viceroy and the Interim Government, and to the President of the Constituent Assembly and others. Thereafter meetings should be held in the respective constituencies of these members for the purpose of obtaining the approval and acceptance of the manifesto by the people at large in the constituencies. After these are done, I think a Committee or Council of Action should also be formed to watch, guide and conduct this movement at every step. I hope the authorities of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee would take early steps to get things in motion.

3. 'Creation of a New Bengal: Enthusiastic Support'

Extract from a Report from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 23 March 1947.

Enthusiastic support to the movement for the creation of a separate province of Bengalee nationalists out of the compact non-Muslim majority areas of Western and Northern Bengal was accorded at the conference held at Indian Association Hall on Saturday evening under the auspices of the New Bengal Association. The conference was very largely attended, the hall being fully packed.

Major-General A.C. Chatterjee, convenor of the conference, addressing the gathering said that this was a movement for the preservation and survival of nationalist Bengal. The British power would go by June, 1948 and unless they took steps now they might be separated from the Indian Union. It was unthinkable that the part of the country which gave birth to the spirit of nationalism in India should be separated from the Indian Union and be linked up with Pakistan. The time at their disposal was very short. They must mobilize public opinion very

quickly so that the Constituent Assembly and British Government might take steps for the creation of the new province before it was too late....

Mr Alamohan Das moved the following resolution:

‘This conference of the citizens of Calcutta and representatives of political, commercial and economic interests, and of the Bar Association emphatically endorses the movement set on foot to create a new province for the Bengali nationalists, out of the compact non-Muslim-majority areas of Western and Northern Bengal and join the new Bengal so formed with the Union composed of the Nationalist Provinces of India, as the conference considers it the only way of ending the intolerable tyranny of the majority community over the minority community in Bengal, and of conserving the culture and language of the Bengal nationalists.’

Dr Bamandas Mukherjee, supporting the resolution said that the for taste [*sic*] of Pakistan they had already had had made them sick of it. If they were to save their lives, properties, honour and chastity of their women they must have separation.

Srimati Hemapra Mazumder said that in this question there should be no party feelings or differences.

Amongst those who addressed the conference were Dr S.N. Sinha, Messrs Saila Kumar Mukherji, Chairman, Howrah Municipality, Sailen Ghose, Dr Srikumar Banerjee and Rai Bahadur Bijoy Behari Mukherjee.

28-MAN COMMITTEE

The Conference endorsed the formation of a 28-man Committee called ‘New Bengal Association’ with Maj. Gen. A.C. Chatterjee the president to conduct the movement. The Committee consists amongst others Mrs Hemapra Mazumder, Mr Mukunda Behari Mullick, Mr Mrinal Kanti Bose, Mr Banku Behari Mondal, Dr S.N. Sinha, Dr Srikumar Banerjee, Mr Radhanath Das, Dr Subodh Ganguly, Mr S.N. Modak, Mr Harendra Kumar Mukherji, Mr Upendra Nath Banerji and Mr Hemendra Prasad Ghose.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED

The following resolutions were also passed at the conference.

‘In view of the notorious handicaps (for example, the communal award) placed on the minority community of Bengal and the consequent helplessness and inability of the few nationalist members of the Provincial Legislatures to throw out the Communal Ministry for their misrule or to check its ever-growing aggressiveness on the minority community in all its spheres of life, this conference calls upon the non-Muslim members of the both the Houses of Bengal Legislature to resign forthwith as a mark of protest and elign [*sic*] themselves with the movement for the creation of a new Bengal.’

‘That the Central Government be requested to take effective steps for the maintenance of peaceful atmosphere in Bengal, so that the inhabitants of the area proposed to be constituted as a separate Province may express their views freely without being subjected to any coercion or physical violence from the majority community of the Province.’



4. Proposal for Separate (Hindu) Province of West Bengal

Letter from J.D. Tyson to G.E.B. Abell, 24 March 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 17, NMML.

Government House
Calcutta

My dear Abell

On Saturday, the 22nd March, Mr Kiran Sankar Roy, Leader of the Congress Assembly Party, came to see Sir Frederick Burrows at his own request, probably to try to find out what HE was thinking about the present move to set up a separate (Hindu) Province of West Bengal. HE has asked me to send you a note he made of the course of the discussion in so far as it was relevant to this issue.

As you probably know, the proposal for a separate West Bengal is at present primarily a Hindu Mahasabha idea and though it has had a guarded blessing from some high ranking Congress leaders at Delhi the Congress Party is not yet committed to it and opinion among Hindus in Bengal is still very divided. So far as we know, K.S. Roy himself has not publicly committed himself to any scheme of the kind, though it is obvious from his visit to HE that he sees and is ready to exploit the bargaining value of the movement vis-à-vis Suhrawardy's pleas for an independent Bengal in which the 45 per cent Hindu element will have their fair share.

Yours sincerely,
J.D. Tyson

ENCLOSURE

Note of an interview which Mr Kiran Sankar Roy, Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Group, in the Bengal Legislature had with H.E., the Governor of Bengal on Saturday, the 22nd March 1947.

After some desultory talk, the conversation was steered by Mr Roy to the present political situation in Bengal and its relation to the political situation elsewhere in India. He said it was inconceivable that Bengal should stand by itself as an independent State and that there was no possibility of the Hindus co-operating if the dominant Muslim majority made that an issue. What the Hindus would probably do in such circumstances would be immediately to launch a passive resistance movement (if it remained at that), refuse to pay any taxes to the existing Government of Bengal and set up a parallel Government of their own to which they would pay taxes. He expressed great appreciation of the Chief Minister's (Mr Suhrawardy's) recent speeches but felt that they were the expressions mainly of his own individual opinion and had but slight backing from the Muslim League Party.

HE said that in his view Pakistan, envisaged as enjoying sovereign and independent status, would be difficult to apply to Bengal divided as it is from the nearest potential Pakistan unit, the Punjab, by over 700 miles of territory comprising two Hindu Provinces and with three Hindu Provinces as its neighbours. He suggested that the proper course for Mr Roy and his Party to adopt was to be reasonable and to meet the Chief Minister more than half way so that a Coalition Government could be set up in Bengal irrespective of what happened in the rest of India to enable a peaceful transfer of power to be made.

Mr K.S. Roy replied that if that could be accomplished he and those for whom he spoke would be more than satisfied and he added that they would be content to leave the issues of the number and distribution of portfolios in such a Coalition Government in the hands of the Governor.

5. 'Suhrawardy Visualizes Independent Bengal'

Extract from a Report in *Hindustan Standard*, 25 March 1947.

The view that even if Bengal could be united with a Centre, whether it was a Centre of All-India or Pakistan, it would be a very loose connection and to all intents and purposes Bengal would be independent was expressed by Mr H.S. Suhrawardy, Chief Minister, in an interview yesterday (Monday).

Mr Suhrawardy spoke against the move for the partition of Bengal. He denied that he was emphasizing on a joint ministry to counteract the move for the partition of Bengal....

In his interview, Mr Suhrawardy said:

'My idea has always been that Bengal should be governed by a ministry in which all sections should cooperate. I tried to do that when I came to power but owing to the all-India tangle and to the insistence of everyone pressing his own point and to the fact that the Congress was not prepared to co-operate with the Muslim League in other provinces, it was not possible for me to take that step.

FUTURE GOVT.

'But in the case of an independent Bengal where we shall be thrown entirely on our own resources and where all of us can have one aim, namely, the prosperity of this Province, I have no doubt in my mind that future Government of this Province must be vested in a ministry which must enjoy the confidence of all sections of the people and that no particular important minority or group should consider that it is being kept out or suffer from any sense of frustration.

'I indeed think it will be calamitous if we cannot work together and pull together. And the move for the partition of Bengal I consider to be conceived in a spirit of defeatism and is due to inability to visualize the future. I should have thought that all Bengalis would have risen in favour of the scheme for a greater Bengal rather than for dividing Bengal into sections....

PRACTICALLY INDEPENDENT

'If you ask me about the future shape of the Province it is not possible for me to make a categorical statement other than, I am sure, that the Province of Bengal will be practically independent of any Central organization. Neither the Congress, nor the Muslim League have till now been able to forecast the future. They have wisely waited for the arrival of the present Viceroy. And I fear that all of us must hold our soul in patience and watch the development of events. All that I hope and pray for is that Bengal may have peace, good feeling and fellowship among its people and prosperity and that it will refuse to listen to advice of persons who wish to encourage the Hindus to separate themselves from their Muslim brethren in order to bolster up their own claims.

Mr Suhrawardy was reminded of the opposition to his idea of Bengal having a status isolated from a Central organization.

Speaking on the point, Mr Suhrawardy said:

'Even if it could be united with a Centre it will be a very very loose one. Whether it is a Centre of All-India or of Pakistan it will be a very loose connection and to all intents and purposes Bengal will be independent and would have to rely upon its resources for the maintenance of its life and future prosperity.'

6. 'Bengal Partition Proposal Opposed'

Extract from a Report from *Hindustan Standard*, 25 March 1947.

Strong protest was registered and a keen sense of resentment expressed against the move for the partition of Bengal, at a representative conference of leaders held at the office of 'Jai Hind' on Sunday last on the invitation of S. J. Akhil Chandra Datta, S. J. Sarat Chandra Bose presided over the conference.

S. J. Sarat Bose said that the proposed partition had to be opposed not only in the interest of East Bengal Caste and Scheduled Caste Hindus, but in the cause of nationalism in India and of Indian independence itself. The partition proposal, he pointed out, was a concession to the principle of Pakistan. It was, therefore, the duty of every nationalist in India and in Bengal, in particular, to oppose the proposal tooth and nail....

Most of the speakers stressed the need for a tearing campaign against the proposed partition and dwelt on the serious dangers to the cause of Indian independence which were bound to follow partition. Partition, they added, was no solution of the communal problem. They pointed out that any nationalist naturally stood committed to an all-out fight against Pakistan. It was therefore illogical, improper and suicidal for him to lend support to the move for partition which amounted to acceptance of the basic principle of Pakistan, namely, the territorial division or re-adjustment on the basis of community or religion. They urged the Congress leadership in Bengal and Congress High Command not to leave the Hindu minority of East Bengal to a dire fate.

The following are the resolutions passed unanimously at the conference:

- I. While emphasizing the supreme need of carrying on a determined fight against Pakistan and communalism and thereby safeguarding the interests of the people of Bengal, this conference places on record the emphatic protest against the move for partition of Bengal inasmuch as:
 - (1) Partition is fundamentally wrong on all grounds—political, economic, cultural, linguistic and social.
 - (2) Partition is no remedy for communalism. It is no solution of the communal problem but is calculated to aggravate it.
 - (3) Exchange of population being a helplessly unpractical proposition, the inevitable effect of partition will be to throw the minority communities of Bengal into the fire of communalism.
 - (4) It is a retrograde and reactionary move. Communalism is only a passing phase in our national life. The destiny of our country will inevitably be shaped by socio-economic and political forces, which have already begun to work. The partition of Bengal will create a permanent cleavage between the two communities and

perpetuate an evil which is bound to die out even earlier than some people find it difficult to believe.

- (5) It will seriously affect the interests and position of the Scheduled caste Hindus, who form a predominantly large percentage of the Hindus in East and North Bengal. In case of partition, the well-to-do sections would naturally be inclined to move out of East and North Bengal and migrate to West Bengal, leaving the poorer sections of caste Hindus and Scheduled caste Hindus to their fate in an area which for all practical purposes would be converted into Pakistan. The very move for partition will thus widen the gulf between the Hindus themselves at a time when serious attempt is being made to do away with all inequalities and caste distinctions.
 - (6) It is a concession to the principle of Pakistan.
 - (7) It is argued by the advocates of partition that it will be a source of tremendous strength to the Hindus of East Bengal and that in case of oppression of the Hindu minority by the Pakistan Govt, in East Bengal, the Hindu Govt sitting in Calcutta will give them protection. This argument cannot stand a moment's examination. How one provincial Govt can give any real or effective protection living under another provincial Government passes one's comprehension.
 - (8) The whole move for partition is obviously the outcome of defeatist mentality which has grown out of a sense of frustration and want of self-confidence but for which there is no justification or excuse. No Govt can possibly function for any length of time against the wishes of a very large minority forming almost half of the entire population.
 - (9) Partition is tantamount to the surrender of almost half of Bengal to communal forces.
 - (10) Salvation does not lie in partition. It can only come out of a determined fight against Pakistan communalism and separate electorate.
 - (11) The move for partition is calculated to strengthen British imperialism and to disintegrate Indian national life and solidarity.
- II. This conference demands that when power is transferred it must be transferred to an Indian Union of which the Province of Bengal shall be a unit.
 - III. This conference further demands that there must not be transference of power separately to divided portions of India.
 - IV. This meeting urges upon the people of Bengal to pool their full strength immediately to fight for a non-communal Government in Bengal which may ensure to all men and women living in the province, freedom from want and freedom from fear of domination by one community or class over another.
 - V. Resolved further that S^r Sarat Chandra Bose and S^r Akhil Chandra Datta be authorized to form a Committee of Action for taking necessary steps to give effect to the above resolutions....



7. Proposal for a Separate Province in Bengal

Memorandum from Bengali Non-Muslim Members of Central Legislative Assembly
to G.E.B. Abell, 2 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 17, NMML.

Feroz Shah Road,
New Delhi.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed is a statement by the non-Muslim members of the Central Legislature from Bengal embodying their considered views on the proposed formation of a separate autonomous province in Bengal within the Indian Union. As a few members are now absent from Delhi, it has not been possible to append their signatures just at the present moment, but they would follow.

In view of the urgency of the matter, I request you to be so good as to place the statement immediately in the hands of His Excellency the Governor General for such action as to him may seem fit and proper.

An acknowledgement is requested.

Yours faithfully,
Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra,
MLA, Central.

ENCLOSURE

Proposed creation of a separate autonomous province in Bengal within the Indian Union.

We, the undersigned Members of the Indian Legislative Assembly and the Council of State from Bengal, deem it our duty to make the following statement on the proposed creation of a separate autonomous province in Bengal.

2. We have carefully considered the situation in the country as it has developed during the last ten years. The absolute majority of the Muslim Members in the Bengal Legislature has enabled them to completely communalise the entire field of administration in the province, with the result that the cultural and economic life of the minorities has been systematically undermined. Besides, the Muslim League Ministry, by adopting the most inefficient, corrupt and reckless methods has wellnigh brought the administration of the province to the verge of collapse and disaster.

3. The events which have taken place since August last have brought things to a head. Criminal misdeeds on an extensive scale, such as arson, murder, plunder, rape, abduction, forced conversion, marriage under compulsion, desecration of places of worship and destruction of property, committed by the supporters of the Muslim League in Calcutta and various places in the country-side with the consent or connivance of the communal Government in power, have brought us face to face with the outstanding realities of the situation. The time has, therefore, come for us to consider what measures are necessary to be taken immediately for protecting the life, honour, liberty, religion, education, culture, language and economic interests of the Hindus and other nationalists of Bengal.

4. The urgency of the matter has been further emphasized by the announcement of the British Government of the 20th February last to the effect that British Rule would come to an

end by the 30th June, 1948 and that power would be handed over before that date either to some form of 'Central Government for British India or in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people'. As the Muslim League has repeatedly declared that nothing short of a sovereign Pakistan would be acceptable to them, their demand includes the transfer of the whole of Bengal to its administration as an independent State outside the Indian Union. This can never be agreed to by the nationalists of Bengal as it is bound to lead to their abject subjection, total loss of freedom and complete cultural effacement. Such a fate for the Hindus and other nationalists of the province who have contributed so largely to the advent of freedom in India can never be contemplated with equanimity.

5. We are, therefore, confronted by the question, namely, whether to live in freedom or in slavery. There is no patriotic or sensible man who will hesitate for a single moment to give the right answer. In our view the only solution of the problem lies in the creation of a separate autonomous province in West and North Bengal within the Indian Union.

6. We have ascertained public opinion on this momentous issue and are convinced that the overwhelming majority of the patriotic and thoughtful men not only in Bengal but in the rest of India is in favour of such a solution. We are, however, aware that there is some objection to this proposal in certain quarters. After having given the most careful consideration to their views, we feel bound to assert that their opposition is based on untenable grounds. They have not so far put forward any alternative suggestions of a concrete nature, and the few hints thrown out by them are wholly impracticable in the present context of things.

7. Of the grounds urged by these critics in opposition to the proposal three deserve notice. The first is that the attitude of the supporters of a division of the province is different from that of the great leaders who fought and unsettled Lord Curzon's Partition of Bengal. This objection is based on a misconception, for the character of the Partition of Bengal in 1905 was entirely different from the division of the province now demanded. Lord Curzon tacked on the Presidency and Burdwan Divisions and the Darjeeling District of Bengal to five Divisions of Bihar, one Division of Chotanagpur and one Division of Orissa. Another ground was that the solidarity and homogeneity of the people of the two parts of Bengal were sought to be broken by that measure, and that the language, culture and traditions of the Bengalees were in jeopardy. But the position has completely changed today. The Muslim League now definitely and strongly asserts that the Muslims are a separate nation and that their language, culture and customs are entirely different from those of the Hindus. It is also now being claimed that Bengal is the homeland of the Muslims alone. The second objection to the proposed creation of a new province is that it will 'leave the Hindu Minority of East Bengal to a dire fate.' But we feel that this apprehension is entirely baseless. At the present moment the people of West and North Bengal are absolutely powerless to render effective assistance to their persecuted brethren in East Bengal. But with full Governmental authority in their hands, they will be in a position not only to assist them in a variety of ways but to prevent any injustice or outrage being perpetrated on them. The third objection is that the proposal is anti-national and that communalism is a passing phase. This is a wholly erroneous view as it is based on an incorrect appreciation of the situation. Far from it being a passing phase, communalism is still growing as is evidenced by the recent tragic events in the Punjab and Bengal as well as by the steps which are being taken even now by the Muslim League to strengthen it. It is idle to expect that communalism in India, which has grown steadily during a period of more than sixty years, will die a natural death in the near future.

8. We desire in this connexion to invite the attention of the public as well as the Government to the formation in Bengal of an organization known as the Muslim National Guards which is assuming the character of a private army and is fast becoming a menace to the peace and tranquillity of the province. Another serious and disquieting development is the creation by the Muslim League Ministry of an armed Police Force consisting entirely of Muslims recruited from outside the province.

9. We fervently hope that the various aspects of the question, as pointed out by us, will be fully appreciated by all. It is our firm conviction that the emergence of a new province would prove beneficial to the inhabitants of both East and West Bengal and that it will foster and strengthen the nationalist forces.

10. We request His Excellency the Viceroy and the Interim Government as well as the Constituent Assembly to take without delay such measures as may be necessary for constituting a separate autonomous province in West and North Bengal as a willing part of the Indian Union.

11. Further, in view of the recrudescence of communal disorder and violence in Calcutta and other parts of Bengal, it is imperative to take immediate steps to prevent more bloodshed and chaos. With this object in view we request that His Excellency the Governor General be pleased to install, as an interim and transitional measure, two Regional Administrations with separate Ministries under a common Governor, for the two parts of the province of Bengal.

Lakshmi Kanta Maitra, M.L.A.

(Calcutta Non-Muhammadan Constituency; also represented the Presidency Division Non-Muhammadan Constituency from 1935 to 1945)

Dhirindra Kanto Lahiri Choudhury, M.L.A. (Central Bengal Landholder's Constituency) Mymensingh, E. Bengal
Ananda Mohan Poddar, M.L.A., Bengal Mahajan Sabha
Narayanganj, E. Bengal.

Susil Kumar Ray Chowdhary, Member, Council of State,
West Bengal Non-Muhammadan Constituency.

Satyendra Kumar Das, Member, Council of State,
East Bengal Non-Muhammadan Constituency

8. Bengal Congress Calls for Partition

Resolution Passed by Bengal Provincial Congress Committee in Calcutta, 4 April 1947

Indian Annual Register, Vol. I, 1947, pp. 238-9.

The Executive Committee of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee in Calcutta on the 4th April 1947 resolved that 'if His Majesty's Government contemplate handing over its power to the existing Government of Bengal, which is determined to ensure the formation of Bengal into a separate sovereign State and which, by its composition, is a communal party Government, such portions of Bengal as are desirous of remaining within the Union of India should be allowed to remain so and be formed into a separate province within the Union of India.'

The resolution further said that while framing the constitution of Bengal even as a province with the Union, if it was not found possible to provide joint electorates and adult franchise

with essential minority safeguards as the basis of the Constitution, Bengal should be divided into two provinces and such portions as were desirous of framing the constitution on that basis should be allowed to form a separate province of their own.

Dr Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, S. K. C. Neogy, MLA (Central) Dr B. C. Roy and S. J. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar attended the meeting of the Committee by special invitation.

The Committee expressed the view that India had a fundamental unity geographically, culturally, ethnically and politically and that in the present international setting, the maintenance of this unity was vitally necessary for the defence of India and for her proper future development. This unity would be ineffective unless there was a strong Centre, and so the Committee considered that the Cabinet Mission's decisions of allotting to the Centre only the three subjects of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications, had been inadequate. At any event, the Union Constituent should contain clear and definite provisions giving effective authority to the Central Government to implement its directives in matters concerning Fundamental Rights and the protection of minorities and of backward tribes, and these subjects must be made a Central responsibility.

The Committee considered that joint electorates with adult franchise should be the basis of the future constitution of the Union of India and all its component parts.

While welcoming HMG's decision to transfer power to the people of the country by June 1948, the Committee insisted that power as a whole should be transferred to the Central Government. It recorded its disapproval of the clause in the statement of February 20 that His Majesty's Government may transfer power even to the Government of some of the existing provinces, as this would break up Indian unity and cut off Bengal from the rest of India and was likely to result in handing over power to some communal party in Bengal.

By another resolution, the Committee noted that certain portions of Eastern and South-Eastern Bengal, the Garo Area, the Chittagong tracts and others, were determined to remain within the Union of India. Having contiguous connection with other parts of the Indian Union, such portions had their inalienable right to remain within the Union. So the Committee expected that in the new Constitution, effective facilities would be provided for these portions to remain within the Union, if necessary by incorporating them in any other province within the Union, contiguous to them.

The Committee also favoured the setting up, immediately, of Regional Ministries functioning in two different regions of Bengal in the interim period, pending the final transfer of power. It recorded with regret that the Bengal Government had failed to give protection to law-abiding citizens and particularly to the minority community, as also to maintain law and order within the province. The Government, as at present functioning, had forfeited the confidence of the law-abiding and peaceful citizens of the province. A Government guided and dominated by a communally composed party could not discharge its obligations towards the citizens, irrespective of class and community. The communal nature of the Government now functioning in Bengal was mainly responsible for the social disorder, defiance of law and order and the general lack of efficiency and integrity usually expected in governmental institutions and offices. Hence, the Committee considered that in the interim period, pending the final transfer of power, the only other alternative was to set up immediately Regional Ministries functioning in two regions according to the desire of the people inhabiting those regions as had been suggested for the Punjab.



9. 'Tarakeshwar Conference: Demand for Partition of Bengal'

Extract from a Report from *Sunday Statesman*, 6 April 1947.

'Our demand for the partition of Bengal is prompted by the desire to prevent disintegration of the nationalist element, to preserve Bengal's culture and to secure a homeland for the Hindus of Bengal which will constitute a national State as a part of India and will afford protection to the minority in Eastern Bengal,' said Mr N.C. Chatterjee in his presidential address at the Bengal Provincial Hindu Conference at Tarakeshwar on Friday.

'The new province will have an area of about 34,000 square miles out of the total area of 77,000 square miles of Bengal,' he added. 'Its population will be about 25 millions, of which Muslims will be about 8 millions. The proportion of the Muslim minority in the new province will be about 30 per cent. The correspondent proportion of the Hindu minority of East Bengal will also be about 30 per cent. Thus the parity between the minorities will be an effective safeguard against any kind of oppression or discrimination.'

'The economic and agrarian problems of the new province are materially different from those in East Bengal. It will have a population bigger than that of many Indian provinces and have sufficient mineral resources and food as well as important industries and will have the greatest port and the biggest university in India.'

'Bengal should be partitioned before the British Government quits this country. Once you go under a Pakistan Government holding sway over the whole of Bengal, you will be doomed for ever.'

'Our plan of action should be definite and clear:

- '(a) We shall have a committee of experts to delimit the boundaries of the new province.
- '(b) Immediately the areas are settled, we shall call upon Hindu MLAs to demand that this territory should be constituted into a new province. If necessary, they should come out of the Assembly and form a separate legislative body.
- '(c) A declaration should be made guaranteeing the fullest protection to the minorities in this new province and safeguarding their religion and culture and assuring every citizen living in that state equal rights of citizenship.
- '(d) Every Hindu living in East Bengal should be treated as a citizen of this new province.
- '(e) We shall present our demand to the President of the Constituent Assembly and ask the Assembly to frame a Constitution and to include this new province as an integral part of the Union of India.
- '(f) We shall place this demand before the British Premier and the British nation and call upon them to implement the principle which the Cabinet Mission formulated in their plan that the Hindu majority areas in Bengal and the Hindu-Sikh majority areas of the Punjab must not be made parts of sovereign Pakistan States.

NEW BENGAL STATE

- '(g) We shall form a council of action to device ways and means to secure the establishment of the new Bengal State.
- '(h) We shall enrol at least 50,000 volunteers, which will be the nucleus of the national army for the new province, from local committees in each village, union and district in order to galvanise public opinion and carry on a campaign in support of this move.

- ‘(i) We shall make arrangements for setting up a provincial government which will take over power from the British Government.
- ‘(j) We shall work in co-operation with all nationalists, irrespective of party affiliations, who will support this demand.

‘If you stand together and give us your support and if you are prepared to undergo the necessary sacrifice, we promise you the new province early next year.

‘On behalf of the Hindus of Bengal we call upon the British Government either to transfer power to the Provisional Government in the new province of West Bengal or to transfer the same to the Central Government....

‘The latest declaration of the British Government envisages the possibility of the imposition of Pakistan on the whole of Bengal. This announcement militates against the previous statements of responsible British statesmen to keep intact the integrity of India and the clear finding of the British Cabinet Mission that there is an almost universal desire for the unity of India. This declaration also runs counter to HMG’s pledge not to allow the minority to place their veto on the advance of the majority....

GREATER BENGAL

‘Some people are talking of Greater Bengal. They suffer from greater delusion. No one will be happier than myself if we can build up a Greater Bengal, as an integral part of Great India, as a self-respecting unit of the Indian Federation. But if Greater Bengal means Greater Pakistan, then it will be insanity to accept such a plan.

‘We do not believe that it is really the desire of the British nation forcibly to disrupt India’s unity and integrity. British rule should be liquidated with honour to England and benefit to India. If British statesmen are really serious in liquidating British rule in India, then the transfer of power should be made from British hands to a strong Central Government in an Indian Union and the attributes of sovereignty should be vested in that Government which will have power to regulate the destinies of the whole of India and will be able to preserve the integrity of India against foreign invasion and internal strife and civil disorder.’

10. ‘Bengal Partition Issue—Leela Roy’s View’

Hindustan Standard, 15 April 1947.

Sjkta Leela Roy has issued the following statement:

‘I am just back from a tour of the Dacca district in several parts of which myself and my colleagues addressed huge public meetings, analysing the general situation in the country and pointing out the extremely harmful implications of a partition of Bengal.

‘In mammoth public meetings anti-partition resolutions were passed and democratic right of Congressmen to propagate their views for and against partition was demanded. We have found everywhere that only a microscopic minority supported the partition move and even they were led more by specious promises which were totally untenable than by sound reason. Many on our presenting the other side of the picture were convinced of the harmfulness of the move the poorer and the younger section of the people were definitely against the move.

‘A wrong impression has been sought to be produced mainly through paper propaganda in Bengal and India that Bengal as a whole or even a majority in Bengal wanted partition.

I am definitely of opinion that this is not a fact. The fact rather is that the other side has been inactive and not vocal and thus gone by default. The time has come when this partitioning of our homeland must be effectively stopped. Our demand is that:

- (1) Not a single Bengalee whether a Hindu or Muslim must leave his homeland—whether he be in the eastern or the western part of Bengal.
- (2) His life, property and religion must be safe from all kinds of hooliganism or interference.
- (3) Free democratic right of voting that is, joint and not compartmental franchise must be assured to him.
- (4) Lastly everyone must have a right to organize and raise a volunteer corps in order to propagate and maintain the above stand.

‘I appeal to those all over Bengal who are of our view of thinking to contact and co-operate with us without further delay for giving expression to and proving what Nationalist Bengal really thinks and desires. Not a day more should be lost. The heart of Bengal is sound, let not her reason be clouded by false and sectional slogans.

‘All are requested to contact us at: The Weekly Forward Bloc Office 47—A Rashbehari Avenue, Calcutta.’

Sjkta Leela Roy has telegraphed to Mahatma Gandhi expressing the wish to meet him urgently on the Bengal partition issue.

11. Report from Bengal Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bengal for the First Half of April 1947, 17 April 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.

Political

1. Uneasiness and uncertainty have been the keynotes of the fortnight and provincial problems, those in Calcutta in particular, have tended to divert interest from the happenings in the rest of India. As must be expected in Bengal under present conditions the problem of communal discord and the best method of escape from the present politico-communal impasse have continued to be major matters of interest.
2. The disturbed conditions in Calcutta have again monopolised the chief measure of interest. The major political parties have continued their efforts to restrain members of the two major communities in the city from continuing their excesses. Some details of the happenings of the period are referred to in the Communal Section of this Report. In brief, the efforts that have been made have been only partially successful and, in fact, the communal tension and uncertainty is greater now than it was in the middle of the period.
3. Political capital has also been sought to be made out of the various incidents that have recently taken place in Noakhali. Injudicious publicity and the issue of statements by Mr Gandhi and others which might be taken as implying a recognition that the general situation in the district is as depicted in the telegram and messages that have been despatched from that area have contributed very considerably to the present sense of unease there. Full advantage has been taken of developments to raise the general

question of the future of the Hindus of East Bengal and the weakness of their position under present conditions.

4. It has been realized that the present disturbed communal situation provides a valuable opportunity to publicise, in Hindu quarters, the thesis that the only method of obtaining relief from the present political impasse is the formation of a West Bengal, separated from the Muslim League controlled East Bengal. Reports from the areas most likely to be affected if such a partition was brought about continue to show growing interest in the scheme—an interest which is being stimulated by constant propaganda in the press and among the thinking section of Hindu society. The major event bearing on this problem was the annual session of the Provincial Hindu Mahasabha held at Tarakeswar in the district of Hooghly where lines of action for the division of the Province were laid down. The attendance at the conference on the 5th was some 25,000—the meeting being presided over by Mr N.C. Chatterjee and addressed by Dr Shyamaprasad Mukherjee and ‘Major General’ A.C. Chatterjee. At the conference a resolution, demanding the partition of Bengal and the formation of a Hindu Province, was formally adopted. A suggestion was also made regarding the formation of Regional Ministries. A Council of Action was formed to achieve these goals and the Working Committee of the Mahasabha is now carrying on informal discussions with the Congress leaders in Bengal to formulate a joint scheme. The Hindus appreciate that the action proposed by them may invoke Muslim hostility and reports received indicate that the Mahasabha contemplates the immediate recruitment of one lakh of volunteers and the raising of a fund of Rs 50 lakhs to be spent for Hindu defence and the movement for the partition of Bengal. The subsequent announcement by the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee in favour of the general principle of partition will undoubtedly strengthen the hands of those working for the success of this proposal.
5. According to the report of the Commissioner, Burdwan Division, numerous meetings, large and small, have been held in support of the movement. The reports of the Commissioner, Presidency Division, show that the movement is also receiving active support from the Hindus of Jessore, Khulna and parts of 24-Parganas. In North Bengal, too, the movement appears to have fairly wide support and in Malda interested parties are already engaged in considering the division of that district on a thana basis! Even in the Chittagong Division there is reported to be a strong section of Hindu opinion who favour partition though the Communist party, the local followers of Mr Sarat Chandra Bose and the Muslims are opposed to it.
6. Though excitement over the Assam Eviction Policy has subsided for the moment in the Chittagong Division and does not appear to be attracting attention in the Dacca Division, interest has continued to grow in the district of Rangpur where the situation on the Assam border has dangerous possibilities. A number of meetings have been held at which speeches denouncing the eviction policy have been delivered: a number of the meetings, notably at Chilmari (30,000) and at Sonahat (10,000) were well attended. Though the Commissioner considers that there is little likelihood of any actual trouble in Bengal, the people have unquestionably been encouraged by this propaganda to consider the ‘conquest’ of Assam as a *jihad*. Fortunately following the visit of Khaliquzzaman Chowdhury to Assam there are indications that Muslim League volunteers have been instructed not to enter Assam though the latest reports received indicate that a second *killa* or fort for the concentration of National Guard

volunteers is being constructed in the Rangpur district on the border of Assam and that preparations are, in fact, being made for the despatch of volunteers into that Province. The whole question of the policy to be adopted towards the activities of the Muslim League of the Province in this matter is under consideration of Government....

12. Independent Bengal to Have Links with Britain

Extracts from a Note by T. Shone on His Interview with H.S. Suhrawardy, 17 April 1947

TOP, Vol. X, pp. 292–4.

Mr Suhrawardy, Chief Minister of Bengal, called on me on the 15th April and stayed for over an hour, during which he did most of the talking. The following are the main points he made—often in the bantering and even flippant way which he affects, but which does not necessarily mean that his remarks are not to be taken seriously....

Mr Suhrawardy expressed the utmost distaste for a divided Bengal. The Province, as now constituted, could become an independent State of wealth and importance, with its 65 million inhabitants. He wanted foreign capital and the assistance of British enterprise to develop Bengal; American capital was also ‘waiting on the door-step’. But how could one know now whether Bengal would be divided or not? And Calcutta was vital to Bengal. At a later stage in the conversation Mr Suhrawardy said he supposed the Hindus might have Howrah while the Muslims kept Calcutta. But he repeated that he did not want to have anything to do with dividing Bengal; and he certainly did not want to have to fall back on Chittagong as the port of a mere Eastern Bengal under Muslim control....

Throughout Mr Suhrawardy’s conversation, there was a strong implication that he wished Bengal at least to maintain a close connexion with Great Britain; indeed, at one point he said ‘I suppose I could offer Bengal to England on a platter, but that the offer might be refused’. He again dropped a remark—not untinged with sarcasm, as when he first made it to me in Calcutta—about the High Commission becoming an Embassy.

When speaking about the division of Bengal, Mr Suhrawardy asked where in the world could one go nowadays, to settle down in peace. Was England a good place,—or Ireland? Or perhaps the Baleric Islands? One must have work of some kind; he believed hall porters at hotels in New York did very well. Several of his remarks in this context gave the impression that however much he dislikes the prospect of a divided Bengal, he fears it may come about.

As Mr Suhrawardy was leaving, I mentioned that I was going to meet Mr Jinnah for the first time next day. He said ‘I hope you will be able to talk—if you want to. Generally, Mr Jinnah will listen to someone for two minutes or so and then get impatient’.

13. Jinnah Rejects All Pleas for Compromise

Telegram from J.F. Burrows to Louis Mountbatten, 18 April 1947

IOR, R/3/1/130, Acc. No. 3448, NAI.

IMPORTANT

SECRET

No. 95-S. My Chief Minister informed me at interview today that while in Delhi this week he had put to Jinnah the strong pleas I had made to him that either the Cabinet plan should be accepted and the League should enter the Constituent Assembly or that a very strong Coalition

government should be set up immediately in Bengal. (I had made it clear to Suhrawardy that I regarded the adoption of one or other of these courses as only method of avoiding civil strife and paving the way in peaceful transfer of power in Bengal.)

Jinnah told Suhrawardy that he regarded the Cabinet plan as dead: that he is not accepting the Congress invitation to discuss it and that he has no intention of entering Constituent Assembly.

As regards forming a Coalition Cabinet in Bengal Jinnah's view was that the proposal was premature.

14. Mookerjee Responds to Suhrawardy

Statement by S.P. Mookerjee, Undated

S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 141, Installment II to IV, NMML.

We have carefully gone through the long statement issued by Mr Suhrawardy regarding partition of Bengal. It is not possible for us to take him seriously in respect of the various points he has raised and in particular to his jugglery of figures based on the last census report. He has painted a paradise for the minority community in Bengal and has appealed to them to agree to remain in united Bengal, which to quote his own self-condemnatory language, will be within a divided India. This paradise to come is hardly comparable to the hell that exists today in Bengal and the untold sufferings of the Hindus which are mostly due to the misrule and mal-administration of a party Government, of which Mr Suhrawardy is himself at the head. The whole basis of the Moslem League demand for the partition of India is that Muslims belong to a separate nation and they refuse to live under the majority rule of the Hindus. It is refreshing to find that Mr Suhrawardy has suddenly discovered that all Bangalees belong to one race and as such they should agree not to partition their province. Is he prepared to suggest that in Bengal, barring in the field of religion which is the concern of individuals as such, there will be no distinction made between Hindus and Moslems in any sphere of administration or public activity? Surely if all Bengalees constitute one race, as indeed they should, does it not logically follow that all citizens belonging to the various provinces will agree to live within one united India, exercising the common rights of Indian citizenship? Or, does Mr Suhrawardy suggest that in respect of Bengal alone we shall follow one rule so that his party and community may dominate over the entire area but in respect of the whole of India Hindus and Muslims must constitute two different nations and Muslims must demand a separate sovereign Pakistan for themselves? And yet Mr Suhrawardy expects that Bengal Hindus must trust him and take him seriously.

We have not asked for the creation of two provinces out of the existing boundaries of Bengal due to any sense of frustration. We have made this demand with a full sense of responsibility. Ours is a most realistic approach and we consider this to be essential for our future peace and freedom, if not for our very existence. In the first place it will enable nearly two-third of Bengal's Hindu population who live in contiguous areas to remain within the Indian Union. Secondly, the creation of two provinces, one predominantly Hindu and another predominantly Muslim, will lead to the disappearance of all feelings of domination and counter-domination and enable the two major communities in Bengal to develop themselves freely according to their wisdom and talent. They must discover very soon that it will be to their mutual interest to protect the minority within each respective area. It may be that within a few years the two provinces may again come together, once the present communal tension and distrust disappear.

Mr Suhrawardy has attempted to drive a wedge between the caste Hindus and Scheduled Castes. He has shed crocodile tears for the welfare of the backward sections among Hindus. We can assure him that inspite of his having bribed a few Quislings, who do not count in the public life of Bengal at all today, all sections of Hindus have nothing but disgust and horror for the way in which Bengal is being administered today and whatever their internal differences may be, they support the demand for partition with one voice as the only way out of their present tragic fate.

We have emphasized over and over again and do so once more that partition of Bengal is only a long term solution and if Bengal is to be saved from destruction the present ministry must be dissolved with the least possible delay. It has failed to discharge the elementary duties that any civilised Government is expected to perform and it has forfeited its right to remain in charge of the affairs of the province for one single day more. To allow it to remain in power is nothing but to compromise with crime.

15. Students Support Bengal Partition

Memorandum from Calcutta University Students to J.B. Kripalani, 21 April 1947
S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 141, Installment II to IV, NMML.

Calcutta

To
Acharya J.B. Kripalani,
President of the Indian National Congress

Sir,

We, the following students of the Calcutta University, have the honour to request you to very kindly place this letter of ours, in which we have tried to analyse our arguments in favour of a partition of the province of Bengal, before the Working Committee of the Congress at its next meeting.

- (1) We the non-Muslim and nationalist Muslim inhabitants of Bengal want to remain in a strong Indian Union. But the present League Ministry of Bengal wants the whole of this province to form a part of their Pakistan scheme, without any relation with the Centre. This they want to do forcibly against the will of its non-Muslim and nationalist Muslim inhabitants. Formation of a separate province in Western Bengal, composed of the compact non-Muslim majority areas, will enable a large majority of the non-Muslim inhabitants and also some of the nationalist Muslim inhabitants of Bengal to remain with the Centre and out of the clutches of this evil-conceived Pakistan.
- (2) Since there is not the remotest chance of the Muslim League coming to an agreement with the Congress and joining the Constituent Assembly before June 1948, the British Government according to their statement of February 20, may hand over all power and authority, in the case of Bengal, to its League Ministry, which in all probability will be in office till June, 1948 because of their brute majority in the legislature due to the communal Electorate. This will mean a virtual establishment of Pakistan in the whole of Bengal. If we must concede to Pakistan, let us make it as limited as possible. This can only be achieved by a timely partition of Bengal and of the Punjab. It has got to be done before it is too late.

- (3) The religion, culture and the traditions of the non-Muslim inhabitants of Bengal, whose past history is so glorious and who have contributed so much to India's fight for freedom are at stake in the hands of the League Ministry. If the Ministry is allowed to have its own way for some time more, these will become things of the past. The only way to save at least a part of them is to divide Bengal. The Bengalee nationalism and the religion, culture and traditions of its non-Muslim inhabitants will find a homeland in the new province of Western Bengal.
- (4) At present the non-Muslim and nationalist Muslim inhabitants of any part of Bengal have absolutely no voice in the administration of the province. Hence the non-Muslims and nationalist Muslims of Western Bengal are almost of no help to the non-Muslims and nationalist Muslims of Eastern Bengal. Thus the plea, that with the division of Bengal the fate of the non-Muslims and the nationalist Muslims of East Bengal will be sealed, does not hold good. It is to be remembered that the Noakhali tragedy occurred while Bengal remained united. Surely the condition of the non-Muslims and nationalist Muslims of East Bengal will not be worse in a divided Bengal than what it is now. Rather, it will be very much better as then the non-Muslims and nationalist Muslims of West Bengal, having a voice in the administration of that new province, will be in a position to render some real and effective help to them.
- (5) From a study of the latest Budget proposals of the League Ministry of Bengal, we can form an idea as to the extent to which the non-Muslim inhabitants of the province are being tortured. The Ministry is spending altogether a sum of Rs 1 Crore and 5 lakhs for the Muslim refugees from Bihar. In spite of the Bihar Government and Mahatma Gandhi's repeated requests to the refugees to settle back in their old villages, they are being kept here with the deliberate intention to 'Islamize' Western Bengal. A new Muslim Educational Fund has been opened to which the annual contribution will be Rs 10 Lakhs. Fifty thousand Rupees are being spent for the construction of Muslim students' hostels in Calcutta Rs 29,000 have been sanctioned for the expansion of Presidency and Islamia College to take in more Muslim students. The scheme for the expansion of research facilities in the University College of Science, for which originally ten lakhs of rupees had actually been sanctioned, has now been abandoned as it was a non-communal scheme. On the other hand schemes are afoot for the establishment of a residential Muslim University in the suburbs of Calcutta at an estimated expenditure of One Crore and thirty lakhs of rupees. Several crores of rupees have been wasted due to the failure of the boat construction scheme and now 7 lakhs are being wasted on the Calcutta Riots' Enquiry Commission. Bengal Government is the most corrupt administration in India. It is to be noted here that the non-Muslims of Bengal pay approximately 75 per cent of the province's taxes. Are we to go on indefinitely paying for our own destruction and only for the benefit of those who support a hostile political organization? A partition of Bengal is the only answer to this question.
- (6) We want a non-communal constitution based on the principles of democracy with joint electorate and universal adult suffrage. We want that under the constitution minorities will be protected and equal opportunities for development and growth will be provided for all, religion, caste, creed, colour or sex being no barrier in any walk of public life. These cannot be expected in a constitution framed by the Leaguers. That they will not yield to the demand for joint electorates is clear from all their utterances. The happenings in Noakhali clearly show that they are not going to protect the minorities.

So far as employment is concerned, they are even prepared to import Muslims from other provinces, if suitable Bengalee Muslims are not available but not to take in non-Muslim Bengalees or even nationalist minded Muslims. Punjabi Muslims recently demobilized from the army are being recruited in hundreds in the Calcutta Armed Police to increase the percentage of Muslims therein. Surely the League Ministry cannot rely upon non-Muslim policemen in the act of suppressing the nationalist spirit. How can we afford such state of affairs to continue any longer? A quick partition of Bengal is the only solution.

Thus to frame a non-communal constitution of their own choice and to find a homeland for the Bengalee nationalism, the non-Muslim and nationalist Muslim inhabitants of Bengal are today demanding a separate province in Western Bengal. Surely in this they are in no way betraying the efforts of those great patriots and leaders who forced Curzon to re-unite Bengal. Curzon divided Bengal to crush its nationalistic spirit whereas now in a division of the province lies the only way to save its nationalism.

Surely a talk of a partition is not out of any defeatist mentality as is said by some still in favour of a United Bengal. Is the Sikh demand for a partition of the Punjab out of any defeatist mentality? After all, the prevention of a division of India is not entirely dependent upon the non-Muslims and nationalist Muslims of Bengal and hence if, in the light of Mr Attlee's statement of February 20, they want a division of the province, they are in no way advocating Pakistan. Rather if Western Bengal remains with the Indian Union, the whole scheme for the so called Eastern Pakistan will collapse and the League will be forced to come to terms with the Congress. We may ask here the supporters of a United Bengal what is their programme to prevent Pakistan. They have not been able as yet to put forward a single concrete suggestion.

Therefore, if we give up our prejudices and sentiments and base our thoughts on realism and facts, we cannot find any plea against a partition of Bengal.

Sir, in conclusion we request through you the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress, to pass a resolution on this vital issue on similar lines as that on the Punjab with modifications, where necessary and take every possible step for the early establishment of a separate new province in Western Bengal.

We remain,

Sir,

Yours obediently,

(signed by 1310 students of Calcutta University)

16. 'Majority of Non-Muslims Opposed to Division of Bengal, Says Mandal'

Extracts from a Report from *Dawn*, 22 April 1947.

THE assertion that the majority of non-Muslims in Bengal were not behind the demand for the partition of the province and that this could be proved by a referendum was made by Mr Jogendra Nath Mandal, Law Member, Interim Government, in a statement to the Press on Monday evening in New Delhi.

Mr Mandal said that the present communal trouble was a temporary phase which could not last long and that the division of the province was no solution to the problem. It was not in the interests of Hindus to divide the province and the Scheduled Castes were definitely opposed to partition.

Although the agitation for partition of Bengal was originated as a sort of bargaining counter to resist and discourage the demand for Pakistan of the Muslim League, it now appears to have assumed serious proportions. So long I had been under the impression that the nationalist Hindus of Bengal would neither welcome nor support the proposal for partitioning Bengal, which when once made by Lord Curzon in the year 1905, was resisted successfully by them with immense courage and sacrifice.

But I have been disillusioned by the resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee supporting the proposal for partition.

I do not mind if the Hindu Mahasabha leader, Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, along with his few colleagues and a number of fortune-seekers of Western Bengal rent the sky with their loud voice and high-sounding words in support of the move for partition, but I am really astonished to find Mr N.R. Sarkar, ex-Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, for whose sobriety and wisdom I had the greatest admiration, also indulge in supporting the game which, I am sure he knows better than anybody else, will produce no fruitful results in the solution of the problem which concerns the Hindus of Bengal today.

...I had occasion to meet and discuss this question with some of the leaders of the partition movement but none of them have so far been able to convince me how the creation of a separate province in western Bengal, governed by Hindu administrators, could protect the Hindus of eastern Bengal who, after the partition is effected, will become a microscopic minority and will feel absolutely helpless.

If the existence of a Hindu province in the neighbourhood is a guarantee for the safety and security of the minorities of a particular province—in this case the minority Hindus of eastern Bengal—then the contiguous Hindu provinces of Bihar and Orissa can as well as an equal guarantee for the minorities of the people of Bengal as a whole.

CONTENDING PARTIES

The creation of a Western Bengal province will only reduce the area of the present Bengal and will only make the border-line narrow and nearer for both the contending parties affording better scope and facilities for a direct combat.

I have no doubt in my mind that if such an eventuality happens, the Hindus of eastern Bengal shall have no other protection than to leave their properties and their hearths and homes and take shelter in western Bengal.

If, of course, the leaders and pro-bounders [*sic*] of the partition movement have in view the ultimate course of transfer of population, then I have got little to say against this move, but I must feel amused that the Caste Hindu leaders, who once so vehemently criticized Dr Ambedkar for his 'Thoughts on Pakistan' and Mr Jinnah for his proposal for transfer of population, appear now to have grown wiser and are themselves advocating those very proposals....

Let me support my contention with facts and figures. The proposal of the Caste Hindus is that the Burdwan Division consisting of the district of Burdwan, Birbhum, Bankura, Midnapore, Hooghly and Howrah and the district of 24-Parganas and Calcutta of the Presidency Division where the Hindus are in a majority should form the proposed province of western Bengal.

They also claim the district of Jalpaiguri in the Rajshahi Division as a Hindu majority district. But so far as Jalpaiguri is concerned, the population of the Scheduled Castes being 32,540 and that of the Caste Hindus being 15,501, the Scheduled Castes are in a majority there and as such their voice should prevail.

POPULATION ANALYSIS

The total population of all the above mentioned eight districts is 1,59,32,646 of which the Muslim population is 30,75,215; hence the total non-Muslim population comes to 12,857,431. The Caste Hindu population of these districts according to the census of 1941 amounts to 53,50,877. This figure includes the population of a number of communities which are equally backward, illiterate and poor as the Scheduled Castes and these communities are, I am sure, not happy under the Caste Hindu domination.

The total population of these communities in those eight districts is 5,22,453. Besides, there are others, namely Pundari or Pundra Khatrai which is a Scheduled Caste community and enjoys all the privileges allowed to them (This community has been included in the Caste Hindu category) and one section of Mahihas [sic] whose total population in the eight districts in question is in the neighbourhood of nine lakhs.

Both of these communities are also unwilling to submit to the Caste Hindu domination.

Thus the position is that the Caste Hindus are only 37.5 per cent. Even if cent per cent of the Caste Hindus of western Bengal support the partition, it cannot obviously be taken as the verdict of a majority.—API

17. Jinnah Opposes Partition of Provinces

Extract from Minutes of Viceroy's Seventh Miscellaneous Meeting, 23 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 196A, NMML.

...Item 4

PARTITION OF PROVINCES

Mr Jinnah said that Muslims were more virile than Hindus. Therefore there had been an enormous increase in the proportion of Muslims, particularly in Bengal and Assam, since the 1941 census. An 'unknown person' had applied his mind to the problem of the proportionate increase, and prepared, on the data of increases between previous censi, a rough estimate of the present proportions.

His Excellency the Viceroy said that he doubted that it would be practical to take such claims into consideration when deciding on demarcation of boundaries, in view of the time factor.

Mr Jinnah said that he had not accepted the partition of Bengal and the Punjab, as reported in certain Hindu newspapers; but had not considered it worthwhile to issue denials. Mr Jinnah said that the partition of Provinces was a most dangerous proposition and bound to lead to trouble, as it was not based on 'wisdom and foresight', but born of 'bitterness and spitefulness'. It would 'loose terrible forces' and was 'suicidal'. It was a 'most dangerous thing when an angry man lost his judgement'.

His Excellency the Viceroy pointed out that all these 'arguments' in favour of non-partition of Provinces applied equally to the non-partition of India.

Mr Jinnah said that in Western Bengal the caste Hindus were only 37 per cent of the total Hindu population. The 63 per cent scheduled castes Hindus would be ruined if they were cut off from those in Eastern Bengal. The idea made them shudder. 'Any average man' should be asked.

His Excellency the Viceroy pointed out that these views were very different to those which had been expressed to him by Dr Mukherjee earlier that day....

18. 'Bengal Harijans Not Opposed to Partition of Province'

The Hindustan Times, 25 April 1947.

Mr P.R. Thakur, Depressed Class leader of Bengal and a member of the Constituent Assembly, strongly repudiated the contention of Mr J.N. Mandal, Law Minister of the Interim Government, that the Scheduled Castes of Bengal were opposed to the Bengal partition movement.

Mr Thakur, in a Press statement, says: 'The Scheduled Castes people on whose behalf Mr Mandal pretends to speak have been strongly opposed to Pakistan, as would appear from the resolutions adopted at many of the Scheduled Castes conferences. As such, Mr Mandal, who is a follower of Mr Jinnah, had no right to say anything regarding the issue of partition of Bengal, which is nothing but an off-shoot of the anti-Pakistan agitation.

Movement Favoured

'Even Dr Ambedkar, whom Mr Mandal acclaims as his political *guru*, does not support Pakistan. Moreover, Dr Ambedkar is definitely in favour of the Bengal partition movement. Mr Mandal's pretensions, therefore, to speak on behalf of the Scheduled Castes people of Bengal fall to the ground since his views on this very crucial issue are at variance with the considered opinion not only of the Depressed Classes League, but also of the leader of the Depressed Classes Federation.

'I should rather say that if Mr Mandal had any sympathy for the wishes and sentiments of the Scheduled Castes people of Bengal, he would have persuaded the Muslim League not to insist on Pakistan in Bengal but to work for a United Bengal under the Indian Union'.—UPI

19. 'Bengal Divided'

Extract from an Article in *The Eastern Economist*, 25 April 1947.

Mr Lovat Fraser, (who spoke with contemporary knowledge of the partition agitation and claimed to some extent to anticipate the verdict of history), wrote of Lord Curzon's achievement 'that Bengal patriots who denounced him for giving them that boon would one day bless his name for it'. Mr Lovat Fraser thought that Lord Curzon himself would live to see this day and was convinced that the Bengalis have far too much intelligence to be unwilling to own when they have been in the wrong. This last statement has certainly been prophetic, although it has taken nearly forty two years for the partition to become (in Lord Morley's phrase) a settled fact.... The present communal situation gives new meaning to Lord Curzon's statement that 'what we want in India is personal knowledge of localities and personal touch with the people'....

What are the resources of the new provinces likely to be? District-wise (and including the Chittagong Hill tracts), the Hindu Province will have an area of 31,919 square miles, against 45,523 for the Muslim province. It will have a population of 19.589 millions against 40.718 millions in the new Muslim Province. The density of population in Hindu Bengal will be something like 614 per square mile against 894 in the neighbouring province. As regards 'hostages', the Hindu minority in the Muslim province (if it is formed district-wise) will be 10 millions against 4.3 million Muslims in the Hindu Province. In other words Muslim will form 21.9 per cent of the population in the Hindu area, whereas Hindus will form 27.9 per cent in Muslim Bengal. This division is much less equitable to the West than if the scheme for claiming the whole of the Burdwan and the Presidency divisions, (without regard to the Muslim

majority in individual districts) were to be adopted. But on the other hand, it is somewhat fairer to the East in the allocation of financial and economic resources.

What the future budgets of the two provinces are likely to be, no one can say with any certainty. Any forecast involves several broad assumptions. In the first place, assumes a certain division of resources between the Union centre and the provinces. It also assumes certain decisions regarding permanent settlement. But even more importantly, any forecast will have to be based on an acceptable principle for the allocation of revenues. If tradition is followed and the allocation is based on actual collection, Western Bengal ... attenuated form (that is, without the addition of a Western strip or the bordering villages) will have a definite superiority. Land revenue which, with the disappearance of provincial excise will be the largest single item of revenue within the existing provincial field of taxation, sufficiently illustrates this difference. Out of the total area of 28.48 acres in Muslim Bengal, roughly 25.86 million acres are permanently settled: the margin is appreciably wider in Hindu Bengal where only 13.29 million acres out of 20.77 million acres are permanently settled. The average incidence of land revenue per head of the population in the two provinces after separation, reflects this disparity in taxable capacity. On the basis of the figures collected in the *Agricultural Statistics of British India (1937-38)*, the average incidence of land revenue per head in Hindu Bengal works out to somewhat less than one rupee, whereas in Muslim Bengal it is somewhat more than eight annas. The vast industrial superiority of the Hindu province will also be reflected in the other available sources of provincial taxation. The return of the distribution of agricultural income reveals the following results:

In rupees	Number of Caste Hindu Assessees	Number of Muslim Assessees
Rs 3,000 to 5,000	2,134	1,094
Rs 5,000 to 10,000	4,080	2,803
Rs 10,000 to 15,000	871	551
Rs 15,000 to 20,000	323	186

This is much more sobering than enthusiasts for Pakistan or independence have imagined, and is due to the fact that direct taxation and customs will not be available to the province.

The prospects of stabilizing the budgets of the separate provinces are not, however, by any means bleak, although this seems at first sight to be a somewhat strange conclusion in view of the current deficits of the Bengal Government. The abolition of the permanent settlement will enable both the provinces to benefit immediately from an increase in land revenue. The incidence of the land tax in Bengal has been found to be less than half the rate at which the tax is levied in Madras. An even greater source of revenue will be central excise, which the Union will in all probability surrender to the provinces. Some idea of the importance of this latter source as a stabilizing factor may be had from the fact that even in 1944-45, the central excise revenue raised in Bengal was as much as Rs 13.05 crores. The yield of this source is of course limited by one major consideration: no province or sub-province can levy excise duties so as to pitch the level of taxation at an appreciably higher level than in the rest of India. But even so, the potential additional revenue from these two sources will more or less solve the financial problem, especially if we remember that retrenchment is yet due. The Finance Ministers of the two provinces, if they are installed in office in the next few months, will be able to plan the

taxation and expenditure for the first full year of separation, namely, 1948–49, comprehensively and precisely on the basis of the division of revenue according to collection. For the current year (or if 1948–49 is not the first full year of separation or if it is otherwise found necessary) the system of joint purse may be tried. It will involve the certification by the Auditor General, or by an expert Fiscal Commission if one is set up, of the total provincial revenue in the entire area now covered by the province of Bengal; this may then be divided between the two provinces in some agreed proportion. The system obviously means some accounting complications, but they are hardly insuperable. On the assumption that the percentage share of each province will be determined with reference to its area as well population (giving equal weightage to both), the share of the Hindu province, formed district-wise works out to 40 per cent. Any current deficit which this percentage system involves can be met through borrowing from the Reserve Bank or from the Central Government for the present. Pending the findings of the Boundaries Commission, this is all that can be suggested at present. This course of action is immediately practicable. It will not on the one hand postpone a decision on the partition question, till a Boundaries Commission or a Financial Investigation Commission or both have reported—a process which may take anything from three to twelve months. On the other hand, by deciding the urgent question of principle in advance, this will enable any such Commission or Commissions to consider the questions of detail on the basis of comprehensive examination and enquiry (which will be possible when there is no compulsion to report within a dead line date).

It remains to consider the economic resources of the two provinces. The vast superiority of the present Hindu districts is obvious, but the extent of this superiority cannot be realized except by careful examination of the available statistics. The Muslim Province will be predominantly agricultural. It had in 1937–38 an acreage of 16 millions under rice and 1.4 lakhs under wheat, against 6.2 millions and 15,700 areas respectively in the Hindu Province. The acreage under gram was roughly 2.61 lakhs and under other foodgrains roughly (10.4) lakhs, against 18,600 acres and 1.5 lakhs of acres respectively in Hindu Bengal. The area under commercial crops is similarly divided. Against 1.2 lakhs of acres under linseed 1.8 lakhs under sesamum and nearly 6.77 lakhs under mustard in the Muslim districts, Hindu Bengal grew linseed on 12,400 acres only, sesamum on 29,000 acres and mustard on 94,200 acres. These statistics justify the description of Eastern Bengal as an ‘Egypt of broad green rice fields with half a dozen Niles’. On the other hand, there are no less than 99 jute mills in the Hindu districts (according to the latest issue of Large Industrial Establishment in India) although there is not even one jute mill in Muslim Bengal. There are 31 cotton textile mills in the Hindu province against 8 in the Muslim districts. There are 203 general engineering establishments in the Hindu area and only 13 in the Muslim area. All the three ordnance factories are located in the 24-Parganas in Hindu Bengal as also all the chemical works. There are 28 oil mills in the Hindu province against only four in the Eastern districts.

These statistics have been selected at random. They justify to a very large extent the old complaint that good administration stops at the Ganges. The industrial and financial prosperity of the Presidency division is largely explained by the distance which separates the outlying districts and sub-divisions of Eastern Bengal from the headquarters. It has been said that ‘Calcutta absorbs the attention of the administration even in the hot season, destroys its sense of balance and leads it to regard the affairs of distant district as of minor importance’. These complaints are not perhaps justified at present. But it is easy to fall into the opposite error of

neglecting Western Bengal. Granted the unwieldy size of the province, the existence of mutual antagonism will inevitably lead to maladministration or neglect of some areas. If the succession of provincial ministries can be so nicely balanced that the party in opposition regularly forms the Government at reasonable intervals, this evil will perhaps correct itself over a long period. But this is an uncertain remedy. Better administration will be secured immediately by partition and greater balance as between agriculture and industry will be forced on the separate provinces. Such deficiencies as the partition may bring to light will hardly be of any great consequence as it will be farcical to assume that self sufficiency should be the aim or that India will not continue to be one great free trade area.

20. Independent Defence and Foreign Relations for United Bengal

Extract from a Note by Louis Mountbatten of His Interview with H.S. Suhrawardy, 26 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 192, NMML.

...I told him that I was ardently against all forms of partition; I wanted above everything a united India. If I could not have a united India, then I would like the Cabinet Mission plan. If I could not have the Cabinet Mission plan, I would then put it to the Provinces to decide. I had been called upon to partition the Punjab, Bengal and Assam, and I expressed my regret that these Provinces should be partitioned, but said that it was unavoidable.

Mr Suhrawardy told me that in the case of Bengal, this was far from being the case, and that since my plan included a vote on whether a Province should be partitioned or not, and if not partitioned, whether it was to join Pakistan, Hindustan, or remain independent, he could tell me now that given enough time he was confident that he could get Bengal to remain as a complete entity. He told me that he could get Mr Jinnah to agree that it need not join Pakistan if it was prepared to remain united.

I told him that this was very good news, for although I was against splitting India up into many units, I considered it far better to keep Bengal as one economic unit than to have it partitioned.

I asked him if he was also going to ask for a separate army, and he said most emphatically; 'Yes'. I pointed out the appalling difficulties of dividing the army into two as well as nationalizing it; those difficulties would be even greater still if the army had to be divided into three, and it would take a minimum of five years, after we had left India in June 1948, for this to come about, and in the meanwhile he would have to accept a Defence Headquarters 'in trust' for India as a whole. He did not like this idea, and seemed to think that the partition of the army could be easily effected. I assured him he was quite wrong, and that in any case I had no intention of allowing the army to be split up while I was still here.

He then mentioned that he hoped British officers would help in the formation of a Bengal Army; and I replied that I did not see how this could be done, since India was not likely to remain within the Commonwealth. He replied 'I beg your pardon; Bengal has every intention of remaining in the Commonwealth'. I told him I thought this was undesirable and that I was personally against any part of India being in the Commonwealth if all of India was not in, lest we got mixed up into supporting one side in a civil war. On this, he said, 'I do not see how you can kick us out, what have we done to be expelled?' I admitted that that put him in a strong position, but that I still could not recommend it, although when the time came I should have to report it.

Mr Suhrawardy then said he must have as long as possible to convert Bengal to the idea of being united and independent. I asked him what the minimum time required would be, and he replied that the absolute bare minimum would be two months. I said that I thought that this was in fact the longest time he could count upon, since I hoped to get a decision within one month; voting of the non-partitioned Province a week later; and voting of the partitioned Province not more than three weeks after that. He asked me not to have a decision on partition until November; and I pointed out that if we left it as late as this, there was practically no prospect of getting partition implemented before we left in June 1948.

I asked Mr Suhrawardy to give Lord Ismay his ideas on the notional partition of Bengal for voting purposes, and said that I would be available if he wanted to see me again urgently at any time.

21. Partition of Bengal Is Suicide

Extract from a Note by H.S. Suhrawardy, 27 April 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 607–14.

It must be a matter of the greatest regret to all those who were eagerly looking forward to the welfare and prosperity of Bengal to find that an agitation for its partition is being vigorously pursued in some quarters. This cry would never have been raised had it not been due to a sense of frustration and impatience on the part of some Hindus inasmuch as the members of their community have not an adequate share in the Bengal Ministry in spite of their numbers in the province, their wealth, influence, education, participation in the administration of the province, their propaganda and their inherent strength. This frustration is largely the result of a failure to realize that present conditions in Bengal, which is linked to India, are not applicable to an independent sovereign state as I hope Bengal will be....

An entirely different state of circumstances will arise when each province will have to look after itself and when each province is sure to get practical, if not total, independence, and the people of Bengal will have to rely upon each other. It is unbelievable that under such a set of circumstances there can exist a Ministry in Bengal which will not be composed of all the important elements in its society or which can be a communal party Ministry, or where the various sections will not be better represented than they are now. I do not think that the fact that the Muslims will have a slight preponderance in the Ministry by virtue of their slender majority will be grudged by the Hindus as indeed this has hitherto been accepted by all as inherent in the nature of things in Bengal. Does any one seriously conceive that it is possible under such a set of circumstances to visualize that one section of the people, say the Muslims, can tyrannize over the minority, namely the Hindus, in Bengal? There are several factors which make such a thing impossible and unbelievable. There is the internal strength of the Hindus themselves, their internal strength which can paralyse any unfair administration. They occupy the most important places in the administration. They are a majority in the services. The administration in the secretariat is in their hands. The most important and the experienced officers of the Government are Hindus. It is just ridiculous to think that their position and influence can be ignored. Over and above this, Bengal will have 200 million Hindus on its frontiers, who will certainly make it their cause to see that their co-religionists have a fair deal in the province. It will just be fatuous and suicidally fatuous for any Muslim Government to give an unfair deal to the Hindus of Bengal.

I have read most fervid fulminations against the Government of Bengal on its alleged treatment of the Hindu population. These denunciations have been built on the most slender and imaginary foundations. I by no means admit that the demand for the partition of Bengal is the demand of the majority of the Hindus even of West Bengal, let alone of the majority of the Hindus of Bengal....The lead for partition has been taken by the Hindu Mahasabha which hopes that, by whipping up agitation for the partition of Bengal, for the dismissal of the Bengal Ministry and imposition of Section 93, by establishment of regional Ministries, by arousing fanaticism against the Muslims of Bengal, by creating disturbances through *hartals* and violence, it will be able to ingratiate itself with the Hindu people and destroy the influence of the Congress. This is but a vain dream as they will find to their cost....The last elections have demonstrated most convincingly that neither the Hindu Mahasabha nor the Congress represent the voice of the Scheduled Castes....Again, amongst the Caste Hindus themselves, there are certain grades of Hindus who, though classified as Caste Hindus, do not follow either the Congress or the Hindu Mahasabha and will be happier under a rule that will work for the common man than under a rule of the privileged classes which will certainly pull for the rights of the privileged classes from which the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha derive their strength. The agitation, therefore, for the partition of Bengal is not so universal amongst the Hindus as it is made out to be, though propaganda may make it appear otherwise.... In the 1941 census there is a large and indeterminate group of Hindus who have refused to record the caste to which they belonged. It will be recalled that at that time a vigorous propaganda was carried on amongst the Scheduled Castes to induce them not to record their castes but to declare themselves as Hindus only; and it can thus be safely argued that those who have not recorded their castes mostly, if not wholly, belong to the Scheduled Castes....

....Why should the Bengalee Hindus want a separate homeland? Let me proceed on the assumption for the time being that the demand is not limited to a few but is put forward by all Caste Hindus, Scheduled Castes and those who have not returned their castes. Now, has their culture, their religion, their language suffered under the present regime? And how do they think that in future set-up they will suffer so that they can only flourish and safeguard their culture and life if they have a small portion of Western Bengal? To my mind, I think, the demand is suicidal from the point of view of the Hindus. Even if it did happen, an eventuality which I cannot conceive that the rule is passed solely into the hands of Muslims intent on crushing the Hindus as a whole, an attitude which would combine the entire population of Hindus in opposition to the Muslims, could such a policy possibly succeed or be put into effect where any Government of Bengal would have to carry its own servants along with it, while most of them belong to the Hindu community? Then again, industry, business and the professions are in their hands. Their youth are well advanced and know their rights and know how to achieve their claims. Not only is the present attitude due to a sense of impatient frustration, not only is it short-sighted, but is a confession of a defeatism which one hardly expected from the great Hindu community of Bengal.

Noakhali is constantly cited as an indication of what might happen in the future set-up of an independent State. I have already said that it would be ridiculous to draw conclusions for the future from the present set-up. But let us pause here for a moment. Can Noakhali and the incidents of that area be considered typical and an augury for the future? And are there not many other districts where the Muslims are in a convincing and overwhelming majority and yet has not peace been preserved in these districts, and have not the Hindus carried on exactly as before with all their powers and privileges?

It is said that this Government is handing out patronage to Muslims in the way of posts, educational facilities and business. It is a pity that this is considered to be a cause for grievance. It is indeed a pity because the patronage (mostly born of the War and shortly to disappear) is of pitiful dimensions, hardly worth noticing, and is merely an attempt to do some justice to the Muslims after their relegation to the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water. But surely in the context of the great unity of Bengal that I dream of, I do not think that, whatever arguments may be advanced at this stage to arouse feelings of hatred against the Government and give force to a demand for separation, the Hindus themselves will object to raising the Muslims and the Scheduled Castes and the backward classes to such a level that they may be able to participate adequately in the advancement of the country.

And let us pause for a moment to consider what Bengal can be if it remains united. It will be a great country indeed, the richest and the most prosperous in India, capable of giving to its people a high standard of living, where a great people will be able to rise to the fullest height of their stature, a land that will truly be plentiful. It will be rich in agriculture, rich in industry and commerce, and in course of time it will be one of the most powerful and progressive States of the world. If Bengal remains united, this will be no dream, no fantasy. Anyone who can see what its resources are and the present state of its development, will agree that this must come to pass if we ourselves do not commit suicide. And suicide for what? Need I repeat, if that assurance is once more wanted, that often enough has Mr Jinnah made it clear that there can be no Government whatsoever, such as he visualizes, which can function in an independent context without the closest co-operation of the minorities; and this dictum is more applicable to Bengal than to any other province in India.

If we can have an un-severed Bengal, if all of us are united with a purpose of making this great, then surely our claims to the districts of Manbhum and Singbhum, perhaps the district of Purnea, certainly to the Surma valley if not to Assam as a whole (of course with their consent, which I think will be forthcoming when the tussle disappears and gives way to co-operation and mutual reliance), are bound to find favour on the principle of self determination, and then we can have a portion of the world that will certainly surpass any other country of like dimensions.

I have therefore visualized all along Bengal as an independent State and not [as a] part of any Union of India. Once such States are formed, their future rests with them. I shall never forget how long it took for the Government of India to realize the famine conditions in Bengal in the year 1943, how in Bengal's dire need it was denied food grains by the neighbouring province of Bihar, how since then every single province of India has closed its doors and deprived Bengal of its normal necessities, how in the councils of India Bengal is relegated to an undignified corner while other provinces wield undue influence. No, if Bengal is to be great, it can only do so if it stands on its own legs and all combine to make it great. It must be a master of its own resources and riches and its own destiny. It must cease to be exploited by others and shall not continue to suffer any longer for the benefit of the rest of India. So, in the end, the tussle will rage round Calcutta and its environments, built up largely by the resources of foreigners, inhabited largely by people from other provinces who have no roots in the soil and who have come here to earn their livelihood, designated in another context as exploitation. Alas, if this is the main objective, as my figures would demonstrate, then no claim for the partition of Bengal can remain static, and a cause for enmity and future strife would have been brought into being, of which we can see no end.

To those of the Hindus who talk so lightly of the partition of Bengal, I make an appeal to drop this movement so fraught with unending mischief. Surely, some method of government can be evolved by all of us sitting together, which will satisfy all sections of the people and will revivify the splendour and glory that was Bengal.

22. Status of Calcutta

Extract from a Telegram from Louis Mountbatten to J.F. Burrows, 28 April 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 17, NMML.

IMMEDIATE

TOP SECRET

... 2. I do not like the idea of a free city. It goes against all the principles on which the rest of the plan is based, it leaves Calcutta cut off from Muslim Bengal, it will not be acceptable to the Hindus, and I do not see how we can enforce it or prevent a fight for the city next year. Besides which it is not for me to make Pakistan into a sensible scheme. I want it to be seen for what it is, while giving the Muslims everything to which they are entitled, and every chance to work out their own salvation.

3. Do not forget that my scheme leaves the door open to a united but independent Bengal belonging neither to Pakistan nor Hindustan. Jinnah would raise no objection to this. Do you think Suhrawardy could bring this off?....

23. 'Bengal Leaders Confer—Partition Campaign to Be Intensified'

The Hindustan Times, 28 April 1947.

The Calcutta situation and the Bengal partition issue were considered at a meeting of the Bengal leaders, Dr P.C. Ghosh, Mr Surendra Mohan Ghosh, President of the Bengal PCC, Dr B.C. Ray, Mr Kiron Shankar Roy, Pandit L.K. Maitra, and Dr S.P. Mukerjee held in New Delhi on Sunday morning.

In the evening there was a meeting of the Council of Action for New Bengal province formed by Bengali residents of Delhi and New Delhi. It was decided at the meeting to send a telegram to Mr Sarat Chandra Bose asking him to support the Bengal partition movement.

It was also decided to take the following measures: (a) To send batches of volunteers to various cities of Northern India such as Lucknow, Simla and Benares which have large Bengali population to intensify the campaign in favour of partitioning Bengal; (b) To send a deputation of women to Lady Mountbatten in order to urge her to take immediate steps for the protection of Bengal women, and (c) To send Press cuttings and other literature in favour of Bengal partition to the Viceroy and leaders of Indian political parties.

It is proposed to set up a permanent office in New Delhi to mobilize opinion in North India in favour of partition of the Punjab and Bengal.



24. Unanimous Support for a Separate Hindu Province

Memorandum on Bengal by B.C. Roy, K.S. Roy and S.P. Mookerjee, 28 April 1947
S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 139, Installment II to IV, NMML.

(Based on discussion with Sir Eric Mievile on 28/4/47)

- 1) Opinion amongst Hindus in Bengal is practically unanimous that a separate province should be created comprising the Hindu majority areas in Bengal so that this new province may remain within the Indian Union.
- 2) Apart from the above consideration creation of two provinces out of the existing province of Bengal will lead to elimination of communal tension and passion, giving equal opportunities to the two major communities to develop their respective areas in their own way. Both major communities are soon bound to realize that in their mutual interest the minority community within each zone must get fair and reasonable protection.
- 3) No separate machinery is called for in order to ascertain the viewpoint of Hindus. Out of the about 93 Hindu members in the Bengal Legislative Assembly we undertake to forward to the Viceroy a statement supporting the demand signed by at least 80 members. These members represent not only the Hindu majority areas but also the Hindu minority areas in Bengal. In addition to this we shall also forward to the Viceroy a statement signed by (...) members out of (...) members elected from Bengal to the Constituent Assembly by non-Muslim members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly. This will render it unnecessary to set up a new machinery elected by members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly belonging only to the Hindu majority areas.
- 4) On the above basis the Viceroy may well decide in favour of partition.
- 5) The next question will relate to the delimitation of the boundaries of the two new provinces. For this purpose a Boundary Commission should immediately be set up which should be instructed to find out the Hindu majority and the Muslim majority areas. It will more or less be contiguous. This division may be made *thana*-wise, subject to certain adjustments which may have to be made in some areas. A map has been drawn up on this basis and has been handed over to Lord Ismay and Sir Eric Mievile.
- 6) If any provisional boundaries have to be drawn up specially for establishing regional ministries pending final partition, Presidency and Burdwan Divisions, each of which has a non-Muslim majority may be one zone; and the other three Divisions, Rajshahi, Dacca and Chittagong, may be the other zone. Only in respect of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri (falling within Rajshahi Division) which afford a gateway to Assam an exception should be made and these areas should remain attached to the Hindu zone. The boundaries thus provisionally drawn up will not affect the final adjustment to be made by the Boundary Commission, nor are they unfair to the two major communities, bearing in mind their respective population strength in the province.
- 7) The case of Chittagong Hill Tracts (which adjoins Tripura and Assam) having 98 per cent non-Muslim majority should be specially considered. This area should be attached to Assam, just as Sylhet may come to Eastern Bengal.

The same remark applies to the small area in Mymensingh district adjoining Assam in which tribal people abound. These people have made representation to the Tribal and Excluded Areas Committee of the Constituent Assembly that they desire to be linked up with Assam. The Viceroy will no doubt consider sympathetically the case of these non-Muslim tribal people living in Eastern Bengal on the border of Assam. The area concerned is _____.

- 8) It is essential that along with the declaration to be made by the Viceroy in favour of partition, the Bengal Ministry must be dissolved. This is necessary for maintenance of law and order and also for smooth transfer of power to the two new provinces. Coalition Ministry will not be possible at this stage. The best course will be to apply Section 93 and the Governor should be instructed to have a Council of Advisers representing the major elements in the province on whose advice the Governor should act during the interim period. This may be followed by the establishment of regional ministries pending final partition. In any case we hold the emphatic view that the present Bengal Ministry must not be allowed to remain in office for a single day following the Viceroy's declaration. If this is done chaos and disorder are bound to follow in as much as the Moslem League in Bengal cannot and will not easily reconcile itself to Bengal being partitioned.
- 9) The situation in Bengal, and Calcutta in particular, is critical. Special instruction should be issued to the Governor by the Governor General in this connection. The legislature should be prorogued immediately and the Governor should see to it that nothing is done which may prejudice in any way the Viceroy's announcement on account of the activities of the Moslem League ministry.

Note on Bengal

- 1) It is for consideration whether the principle of partition of Bengal (and of the Punjab) should be decided by the Viceroy or should be left to be determined by some machinery to be set up by the members of the Legislative Assembly, belonging to the two respective zones.
- 2) I suggest the Viceroy's Declaration may be on the following lines:
 - (a) The implementation of the Cabinet Mission scheme was based on agreement among the major political parties in India. This agreement is not available. It is the policy of HMG, which has been accepted by the Congress, that no constitution will be imposed upon any unwilling areas which is unrepresented in the Constituent Assembly. Therefore the function of the present Constituent Assembly is automatically limited to the areas which are willing to co-operate with it. The question arises in particular with regard to the Punjab and Bengal. Both these provinces have compact areas which are predominantly non-Muslim. It is therefore necessary that these two provinces should be partitioned forthwith and two additional provincial units created out of the existing boundaries of the Punjab and Bengal, so that each unit may decide independently on its future policy.
 - (b) Having arrived at this decision the Viceroy will then proceed to indicate how the partition will be effected.

It was suggested to me yesterday that the Viceroy might provisionally demarcate the areas. The advantage of this is that the members of the legislature belonging to such areas may at once meet separately, elect their representatives to the Constituent Assembly or Assemblies and decide whether they will remain within Hindusthan or Pakistan.

The disadvantage of such a decision is that the Viceroy cannot possibly make a final demarcation now and the Boundary Commission may have to revise the areas. I do not want any controversy into which the Viceroy will be drawn affecting the actual boundaries of the two new provinces. It will be fatal if the Viceroy gets mixed up in any agitation regarding delimitation.

A much simpler course will be for the Viceroy to announce that partition will be made and also to state the main principle on which it will be based. India is at present one united country. If any part of India wants to break away from India, it can only do so provided that part consists of sufficiently large contiguous areas, each area comprising of say 60 percent of people belonging to the majority community. In other words if Muslim Bengal is to be separated out of the existing boundaries of Bengal and taken out of India altogether, such Muslim Bengal should comprise those contiguous areas where Moslems are at least 60 percent. If a percentage higher than bare majority cannot be fixed, it will then be contiguous areas (not necessarily districts) with Muslim majority. The border-line areas and some 'pockets' may need special adjustment.

- (c) Having laid down the principle the Viceroy will announce that a Boundary Commission will be immediately appointed to demarcate the areas and also to lay down the fundamental principles on which exchange of population and property may be effected with the help of the State.
- (d) The composition of the Boundary Commission may be suggested to the Viceroy within a specified date by agreement between the major parties in the legislature, failing which the Viceroy will nominate the Commission. The Commission will report to the Viceroy by 31st July, 1947.
- (e) As soon as the province is partitioned into two zones the existing members of the Legislative Assembly (excluding the European members) will sit separately and elect their representatives to the Constituent Assembly on the lines mentioned in the Cabinet Mission scheme. The Viceroy will reserve to himself the right to allot certain members who represent special constituencies to either of the zones and may also give such directions as he may consider necessary for those members who may represent constituencies, the whole of which may not fall into one or other of the zones.
- (f) This election should be completed by 31st August, 1947. The members so elected will then decide whether they will remain within Hindusthan or within Pakistan.

The third alternative of a Sovereign Bengal may be ruled out as unnecessary.

- (g) The Viceroy's declaration must also include his decision to dissolve the Bengal ministry. Apart from the grave situation created in Bengal due to the actions and inactions of the ministry, it is unthinkable that any one-party ministry should be allowed to remain in charge of the whole of Bengal during the interim period.

Partition of Bengal is and will not be to the liking of the Moslem League, although it may be forced to accept it as a logical outcome of its own Pakistan scheme. But to keep the Moslem League ministry in power in Bengal during the interim period will not only result in the complete breakdown of law and order but will create new complications which may be extremely difficult to meet. It is therefore only fair and proper that both in respect of the Punjab and Bengal, once the partition issue is decided upon, an administration which will be fair and just to both zones and to the major communities must be installed. This may be either some form of regional ministries with one Governor at the top or section 93 regime. We need not shudder at section 93 regime at all, if that becomes temporarily inevitable for a peaceful transfer of power. The Governor may be instructed to have his non-official Advisers, if the major parties are willing to cooperate. Three main tasks will face this Interim Government, namely, (1) to maintain peace and order (2) to refrain from any controversial legislative and administrative measure which may affect the rights of the two areas and (3) to settle, by agreement if possible, the division of the official personnel so that the two zones might act as independent units when the transfer of power will take place.

I would certainly urge that the Viceroy should not allow the Bengal situation to deteriorate any further for a single day. Even today legislative measures of a highly controversial nature such as the Abolition of Zamindari System, Acquisition of Waste Land Bill and Education Bill are being brought forward, each one of which may throw the province into chaos and confusion. The Viceroy should immediately ask the Governor to prorogue the legislature and maintain the status quo until the Viceroy's declaration is made. The opposition made this request to the Governor but this has not been accepted.

Rapid recruitment of Punjabi Moslems to the Armed Police Force is continuing. Unless this is stopped, grave complications are bound to arise. The Viceroy cannot deal with individual items, if he feels partition of Bengal is inevitable, he should at once save the province from the domination of the Moslem League ministry.

If the ministry is to cease to function simultaneously with the declaration of the Viceroy, negotiations should be made with the Governor with the least possible delay. Bengal is on the edge of volcano today and what I have suggested above will not only help to maintain law and order with strict impartiality but will also make it easier for the Viceroy to effect a peaceful transfer of power at the appropriate time.

I enclose a press cutting containing a statement of the Home Minister of Assam. This shows how urgent and serious the situation is.



25. Demand for Separate Non-Muslim Province in Bengal Irrespective of Partition

Resolution Passed at the Conference of Commercial and Industrial Organizations in Calcutta, 29 April 1947

R.P. Papers, File No. 19-P/47, Part II, NAI.

BENGAL NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Copy of the Resolution adopted at the meeting of the representatives of several commercial organizations held on Tuesday, the 29th April 1947 at the Hall of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce under Chairmanship of Mr D.C. Driver.

This Meeting of the representatives of the under mentioned industrial and commercial organizations on a very close and careful consideration of the constitutional set-up of the country as it is likely to emerge from the various proposals now being discussed and the likely effects of such a constitutional set-up on India's economic development, trade, commerce and industry as a whole and on the commerce and industry of Bengal in particular is emphatically of opinion that for the general well-being of the country and in the interest of her quick, balanced and orderly economic development, through the maximum and the most efficient exploitation of the available resources, both human and material, Indian Union should be treated as one economic unit. This Meeting believes that only by accepting the fundamental economic unity of Indian Union, will it be possible to ensure her planned economic development on a scientific and rational basis with a view to raising the existing level of employment increasing the purchasing power of the masses and improving their standard of living which would create fresh demands for goods and services and offer invaluable stimulus for the development of industry, trade and agriculture.

This Meeting is further of the opinion that in addition to Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications which the Cabinet Mission in its Statement of May 16, 1946 conceded to the Union Centre, (a) currency and exchange which is a supersensitive mechanism and forms the basis of the economic life of the people, (b) customs and excise in respect of which a uniform policy for the whole of India is essential for the maintenance and growth of India's widely dispersed industries, (c) generation of power on which depends the future growth and development of her existing industries and the establishment of new ones and which can best be secured under a unified control and coordination, (d) labour legislation where also uniformity is equally essential, (e) food which again calls for a common and comprehensive India-wide policy specially in the face of the existing food shortage and (f) the existing and future location of the Defence industries in respect of which the interests of the different parts of India are interdependent should all be under the jurisdiction of the Union Centre in the interests of India's economic development.

In the opinion of the representatives assembled at this Meeting while the exercise by the Union Centre of powers mentioned above is eminently desirable the loose Federation envisaged by the Cabinet Mission under which only Defence, Communication and Foreign Affairs and powers to raise the necessary finance therefore would belong to the Centre should be the absolute minimum. In case however any area chooses to stay out it cannot force parts within the area which desire to remain inside the Union to go outside the Union against their will.

In view of all the above this Meeting demands that in the event of the Muslim majority in Bengal deciding to form a Pakistan State outside the Indian Union, or even if they decide to remain within the Indian Union unless the constitution framed for Bengal is acceptable to the Hindu Minority in the province, the Burdwan Division, Calcutta, Presidency Division and portions of Rajshahi Division and such other areas, where there is a non-Muslim majority and which form a contiguous area, should be allowed to constitute themselves into a separate province to be run on a truly democratic basis and to form a part of the Indian Union.

This Meeting further resolves that copies of the Resolution be forwarded to Britain's Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy, the President of the Congress, the Vice-President of the Interim Government of India, the President of the Constituent Assembly and to the Press; and that a Committee composed of the following gentlemen be appointed to take necessary action for securing the objective laid down in the Resolution:

Mr D.N. Sen (President)
 Mr N.R. Sarkar
 Mr D.C. Driver
 Mr B.M. Birla
 Sir Buddredas Goenka
 Mr B.L. Jalan
 Mr J.K. Mitter
 Dr S.B. Dutt
 Mr M.L. Shah
 Mr S.C. Roy

The following Chambers of Commerce and industrial and commercial organization were represented at the Meeting:

Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, Indian Chamber of Commerce, Marwari Chamber, Indian Sugar Mills Association, Indian Chemical Manufacturers Association, Indian Insurance Companies Association, Indian Paper Mills Association, All-India Plywood Manufacturers Association, Engineering Association, Indian Chemical Merchants Association, Cycle Manufacturers Association, Indian Non-Ferrous Manufacturers Association, Indian Homp Association, Indian Mining Federation, Indian Tea Planters Association, All-India Soap Makers Association, Bengal Mill Owners Association, Bengal Glass Manufacturers Association, Bengal Banks Association, Calcutta Paper Traders Association, Indian Plywood Manufacturers Association, Bengal Rice Mills Association, Bengal Trades Association, Retail Textile Dealers Association, Calcutta Cloth Ration Shops Association, Federation of Calcutta Textile Dealers Association and Indian Lamp Factories Association.

26. The Position of Calcutta with Regard to the Division of Bengal

Extract from a Note by W. Christie, 29 April 1947
 Mountbatten Papers, File No. 17, NMML.

...3. On the question of Calcutta, the Governor's original recommendation was not firm. In his note on the provisional partition of Bengal he recommended a formula which, in terms, assigned Calcutta and its suburbs to West Bengal. He added a rider to the effect that a fairer arrangement would be one under which both Provinces could enjoy the benefits to be derived

from access to the wealth of Calcutta. Such an arrangement would also be more fair to Calcutta itself. The disposition of Calcutta might well prove an important bargaining point in inducing the League to accept a truncated Pakistan in Bengal....

The main consideration is that we are about to prescribe a procedure which not only makes the provisional partition of Bengal a cast iron certainty, but removes nearly all chance of Bengal becoming united again. So long as the Bengal Hindus have partition *and* Calcutta, they have all that they want. Reunion with East Bengal would only put them again in a position of numerical inferiority to the Muslims.

But if Calcutta were to be a no-man's land, and the Muslims had a share in it (which need not necessarily be a 50 per cent share of its revenues: that would be a matter for mutual agreement or arbitration), there would be common ground on which the two parts of Bengal might eventually reunite.

The Muslims are likely to fight for Calcutta if they have no share in it at all.

The Hindus are less likely to fight for the absolute control of Calcutta.

The following passage in Mr Suhrawardy's recent statement is significant. 'So, in the end, the tussle will rage round Calcutta and its environments built up largely by the resources of foreigners, inhabited largely by people from other provinces who have no roots in the soil and who have come here to earn their livelihood, designated in another context as exploitation.'

The effect of our plan would be to set the seal on the partition of Bengal and make Civil War, and paralysis if not destruction of India's greatest commercial centre, almost inevitable. The Governor's proposal lessens the likelihood of Civil War over Calcutta, and provides an important matter of 'common concern' as a basis for reunion. The objections to the Governor's proposal that Calcutta should not be allotted to either half province, but should be administered as a condominium, are therefore probably less than the objections to our plan in its effect on Bengal....

27. Representative Character of Scheduled Caste MLAs Questioned

Note by J.D. Tyson, 29 April 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 17, NMML.

In view of the arguments based on the supposed attitude of the Scheduled Castes to Pakistan and the difficulty of saying how far the present Scheduled Caste Members of the Assembly represent the views of the Scheduled Castes since they were ultimately elected to the Assembly on the vote of Scheduled Caste and Caste Hindus together, H.E. will find the statement below, which I have had run out in office today, extremely interesting and more informative than might have been expected.

It is clear that out of 30 reserved seats no less than 15 were filled without any contest at either the primary or the final elections and that of these 15 no less than 13 went to Congress candidates without contest. (The uncontested seats won by Congress were in Burdwan 2, Birbhum 1, Bankura 1, Midnapore 2, 24-Parganas 2, that is, 8 out of 10 seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes in West Bengal. In North Bengal Malda 1, Jalpaiguri 1, Rangpur 1, that is to say 3 out of 5 seats in North Bengal went uncontested to the Congress. In East Bengal only one seat (Mymensingh) was uncontested and this went to a Congress candidate. They also obtained one uncontested seat in Murshidabad. The other two uncontested seats were—Mr P.D. Raikut who stood as an Independent for the second seat in Jalpaiguri and the Hon'ble Mr N.N. Roy who won the second seat in Rangpur without a contest).

It would appear therefore that in South West Bengal the Scheduled Castes are Congress-minded and in North Bengal personalities seem to have counted more than politics and the result was divided.

Most of the contests were in Central and East Bengal,—Hoogly, Howrah, Nadia, Jessore, Khulna, Dinajpur, Patna cum Bogra, Dacca, Mymensingh, Faridpur, Bakarganj and Tippera. Of the 15 seats contested all over the Province Congress won 8 and in *each case* was at the top of the Poll at the primary election as well as at the general election. I cannot find a case where an Independent or non-Congress Scheduled Caste candidate headed the list in the primary election and was defeated with the aid of Caste Hindu votes in the final election. In fact there is only one instance in all the 15 seats filled by contest where a candidate who was not the first candidate at the primary election was returned at the final election; this is the case of the Hon'ble Mr D.N. Barori who was fourth of 8 candidates in the primary election for two seats in Faridpur and came up to first or second place in the final election thereby securing one of the two seats.

J.D. TYSON

28. Scheduled Castes Should Be Mobilized in Bengal

Letter from J.N. Mandal to M.A. Jinnah, 30 April 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 632–3.

3 COOPER STREET, CALCUTTA,

My dear Quaid-i-Azam,

I am sending Mr G.D. Pramanick with this letter. He belongs to the Scheduled Sunsi Community and is a trusted friend of mine.

I have set up the organization to carry on our work in Western as well as Eastern Bengal. I had a long discussion with Mr Suhrawardy yesterday. I have collected a number of workers from both Eastern and Western Bengal. I have already put in a number of workers in the Districts of Khulna, 24-Parganas, Howrah, Burdwan and Midnapore. It will be necessary to carry on a very extensive and intensive propaganda in Western Bengal, that is, in Burdwan Division and 24-Parganas. The Scheduled Caste people thereof being very backward in education, we shall have to meet with difficulty. But if I could put in a large number of workers we are sure to achieve success.

I now propose to start with a sum of Rupees twenty-five thousand. I shall be able to send you a report of the progress of work after ten days. It is an encouraging aspect that our workers do not cost me much.

Kindly send the above-mentioned sum with Mr Pramanick with your instructions, if any. I am well. Hope this finds you hale and hearty.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
J.N. MANDAL



29. Agitation for Partition and the Need to Unseat the Bengal Ministry

Letter from N.C. Chatterjee to S.P. Mookerjee, 30 April 1947

S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 141, Instalment II to IV, NMML.

My dear Shyamaprasad,

Enclosed herewith please read a report from Mr Meher Chand Dhiman.

Major General Chatterjee rang up his Secretary this morning to ask me to be prepared to leave for England on a deputation in connection with the Partition agitation. I told the Secretary, Dr Ganguli, that I am not going to do anything of the kind unless you are going and also a strong team is sent, if at all necessary. It is no good spoiling the case by sending up a second-class deputation. I am told that Pundit Lakshmi Kanto Moitra MLA has also been good enough to volunteer to go. Dr Ganguli saw me in the afternoon and I made the position clear to him. The deputation, if Bengal really wants to make it successful, should consist of yourself, Dr Roy, Major General Chatterjee, myself and Pundit Moitra or any other distinguished MLA if he likes to join us.

I do not know what good we shall do in England. It is much better if we can organize 10 days' Hartal here and break the Bengal Ministry. One day's Hartal has to some extent unnerved them and Suhrawardy's tone has changed. Ten days' Hartal can be made successful if the Congress leaders show wisdom and courage to join hands with us in this crisis.

Every day prominent Hindus are being killed. Col Sen Gupta has been killed the other day. Sir Jadu Nath Sircar's eldest son has also been killed. Col Sen Gupta's factory has been looted after he was murdered. Of course that did not bring any Curfew or strong action.

I am sending you also a note given to me by Major Burdhan on information supplied by some high official.

Regarding Hindusthan National Guard, I am going to meet Dr Trivedi and others on Friday evening. Baku is telling me that the southern section is threatening to revold [*sic*] against the centre. I do not understand what is happening. I shall have a frank talk with them.

I am also enclosing a copy of a report of a meeting of all Relief Workers held at Chaumohani. That was organized by Mr Dalal who went to Noakhali and was attended by Congress, Hindu Mahasabha and other workers and was very representative.

Yours sincerely,
N.C. Chatterjee

Copy of a letter already posted.

30. Need to Divide Bengal Irrespective of Partition of India

Letter from S.P. Mookerjee to Louis Mountbatten, 2 May 1947

Mountbatten Papers, File No. 18, NMML.

C/O Director, Imperial Agr.
Research Inst. New Delhi

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Since I met Your Excellency about ten days ago I have had two long discussions with Lord Ismay and Sir Eric Mieville. At the last interview with Sir Eric Mr K.S. Roy, Leader of the

Opposition in the Bengal Legislative Assembly and Dr B.C. Roy were also present. I sent some notes and a map to Lord Ismay which I believe you have seen by now.

The next few weeks will be momentous in the history of India and of the Punjab and Bengal in particular. I was deeply struck by the earnestness and sincerity with which you were trying to appreciate the problems that face India today and which must be solved before the final transfer of power takes place by June, 1948.

The views I am expressing in this letter are shared by a very large section of Hindus not only in Bengal but in other parts of India and I hope Your Excellency will give due consideration to them.

We are definitely opposed to Pakistan. We say this not merely from the point of view of Hindus but in the interest of India as a whole. The Constituent Assembly today represents every province in British India and also a number of important Indian States. One Moslem majority province namely NWFP is represented by a majority of its members. The Muslim members belonging to Bengal, Sind and the Punjab are no doubt absent and they are represented only by the Sikh and Hindu members. This obstructionist attitude on the part of the Moslem League should not weigh with HMG at all. If HMG can take courage in both hands and announce that it is not going to depart from the main provisions of the Cabinet Mission scheme, the situation will at once change. If it is further announced that the Constituent Assembly will be accepted as the first Provisional Parliament of Free India and the transfer of power will be made to a Provisional Government to be elected by the Constituent Assembly on the basis of proportionate representation, the Moslem League is bound to alter its present attitude of negation and obstruction and take its legitimate part in the administration of the country.

Whether division of India takes place or not, it is essential that the Punjab and Bengal should be partitioned. I shall not say anything about the Punjab in my letter as her representatives must have placed full facts before you already. I shall deal with Bengal only.

The reasons why Bengal should be partitioned in any case are as follows:

- (1). Bengal's area is about 78,000 square miles and her population is more than 60 millions. Purely from administrative standpoint, creation of two provinces out of the existing boundaries of Bengal is not only possible but eminently desirable. Bengal today is admittedly one of the worst administered provinces in British India.
- (2). Bengal Hindus have suffered terribly during the last ten years on account of communal misrule and mal-administration. In spite of their immense contribution towards the development of the province, they have no voice in its administration. Protection of Muslim interests is not the only minority problem in India. If ever an impartial survey is made of Bengal's administration during the last ten years it will appear that Hindus have suffered not only on account of communal riots and disturbances but in every sphere of national activities, educational, economic, political and even religious.
- (3). Fortunately for Bengal the two major communities live in two compact zones and a separation is rendered easier on this account. Hindu Bengal will have about 35,000 sq miles with a population of about 24 millions. This will be equal to, and even larger than, some of the existing provincial units in India and also some States in Europe and America.
- (4). More than two thirds of the Hindu population including about 4.5 millions out of 7.6 millions of the scheduled castes will live within Hindu Bengal. This will give an

opportunity to both major communities to develop themselves according to their best ability and traditions and the constant rancour and strife between one community and another will gradually disappear. Both major communities in the two provinces are soon bound to realize that in their own mutual interest, the minority community in the two respective provinces must be duly protected.

Both the provinces should remain within the Union of India. If however India is to be divided on communal consideration, partition of Bengal becomes an immediate necessity and the above arguments are strengthened by the following additional ones:

- (1). Mr Jinnah's claim for Pakistan is based on the theory that Hindus and Muslims are two separate nations and Muslims must have their own homeland and their own State. That being so, Hindus in Bengal who constitute about 26 millions of people may well demand that they must not be compelled to live within the Moslem State and the area where they predominate should be cut off, so that the province thus created may link itself up with the Hindusthan Union. This demand Mr Jinnah can never resist for, as the Cabinet Mission pointed out in its scheme of May, 16, the same logic and arguments applicable to Pakistan apply also to partition of Bengal.
- (2). If Muslims being 24 percent of India's population constitute themselves into such a formidable minority that their demand for a separate homeland and State becomes irresistible, surely 45 percent of Bengal's Hindu population is a sufficiently large minority which cannot be coerced into living within the Pakistan State against the will of the people.
- (3). It is said that if once Bengal and the Punjab are partitioned, the other portions of India have also to be partitioned on similar consideration. This is purely academic. If there are other areas in India which are large enough to be constituted into separate provinces on communal consideration, their claim has to be justified on merits. Surely the existence of small pockets here and there cannot justify the creation of new provinces. Even in Eastern Bengal, there will be numerous towns with majority Hindu population and also several Hindu pockets; but we are noting to claim that each of them is to be converted into a provincial unit. It is only because the Hindu majority areas, contiguous in character; are large enough to form into a separate province that we are justified in putting forward our claim for partition.
- (4). Mr Jinnah speaks of transfer of population and property. If an undivided Bengal is thrown into Pakistan, we have to transfer about 26 millions of Hindus which is next to impossible. On the other hand if Bengal is partitioned the question of transfer will be comparatively easier it will affect about nine millions Hindus in Muslim Bengal and six millions Moslems in Hindu Bengal.
- (5). There is some loose talk of a sovereign undivided Bengal. We do not understand its significance at all nor do we support it in any way. This will give us, Hindus, no relief whatsoever. Sovereign undivided Bengal will be a virtual Pakistan. Who will frame the constitution of Sovereign Bengal? Obviously, this will be left in the hands of the majority of the Moslem Leaguers who will be guided by fanatical notions of a separate nationhood and we are not prepared to trust our fate to them. Further we do not in any case want to be cut off from the rest of India and we are not prepared to make any compromise on this issue on any consideration whatsoever.

I do hope you will give full consideration to the above points. You have come to India with an open mind and to explore the safest way to transfer power to Indian hands. By being fair to both the major communities in Bengal would it be possible for you to avoid chaos and bloodshed. Our suffering in Bengal today is indescribable. We have ceased to live under a civilised Government and the rule of law has been substituted by the rule of gangsterism. You may either decide the question of partition yourself or set up a machinery which will make it possible for the people of the area concerned to express their views. I would however emphasize, as indeed I did in course of my interview with you, that it is essential that the Bengal Ministry must be dissolved as soon as the question of partition is announced. To allow the ministry to continue in office may lead to disastrous consequences from which recovery will become almost impossible.

I have written to Your Excellency with utmost frankness for I honestly believe that it is a life and death question to us. Freedom is about to dawn on India and we, who constitute not a negligible number amongst the people of India and whose contributions to the growth of India's progress have been considerable, have the right to demand that in the Free India to come we must have a territory assigned to us wherein we can live without fear and enjoy the fruits of peace and freedom, without depriving the other majority community of its rightful interests in the area in which it predominates.

I shall be leaving for Calcutta on Monday by air. If you feel that there is any further point which I should clarify, please let me know. I shall be prepared to come and meet you any time, now or later, when you may be good enough to summon me. I hope you will also be able to meet Mr K.S. Roy, representing the Bengal Congress, now in Delhi, who also shares my views substantially.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

31. Opposition to United Bengal within Muslim League

Letter from H.S. Suhrawardy to Liaquat Ali Khan, 5 May 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 696–7.

BENGAL SECRETARIAT, CALCUTTA

My dear Liaquat Ali Sahib,

I am sure that you have seen the statement of Maulana Akram Khan on my scheme of undivided sovereign Bengal and he finds in it an opposition to the Muslim League and to the Quaid-i-Azam. It is people like these who destroy the best-laid [out] schemes by their foolishness and their partisan spirit. He has sabotaged my plan definitely and given a setback to the headway which I was making amongst the Hindus. If Bengal is divided, both sections will be weak and negligible. More so, our section, which, although it has got a large enough population, is so deficit in food grains that no amount of intensive cultivation will be able to produce a sufficiency. I am also just unable to realize how a weak Eastern Bengal can be of any assistance to the Muslim cause or be any strength to the Muslims or help the Muslims in the minority areas. The old Maulana's and his party's antagonism to Mr Abul Hashem blinds him to the folly in coming out with statements injurious to the Muslim cause.

I may be coming over to Delhi on the 16th or the 17th in spite of the heat.

Yours sincerely,
SHAHEED

32. Demand for Two Regional Ministries

Letter from Jogesh Chandra Mukherjee to S.P. Mookerjee, 5 May 1947
S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 141, Instalment II to IV, NMML.

Bar Association
Dacca.

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the resolution passed at the Extra-Ordinary General Meeting of the Dacca Bar Association held on 5.5.47 for your information. The substance has already been communicated by telegram

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
J.C. Mukherjee
Secretary.

ENCLOSURE

Resolved that the present Ministry of Bengal is inefficient, corrupt and has been guilty of wanton discriminatory acts of commission and omission as a result of which the province of Bengal has been undergoing untold miseries and normal life of the people has come to a standstill. This association urges upon the authorities concerned to remove forthwith the present Ministry of Bengal and to form two regional Ministries till partition of Bengal which this association already demanded.

Nil Kamal Chakravarty
President,
Bar Association, Dacca.

33. Congress Leader's Assurance about Securing Partition

Extract from a Letter from Rajendra Prasad to M.N. Saha, 5 May 1947
R.P. Papers, File No. 6-I/45-6-7, NAI.

1 Queen Victoria Road
New Delhi.

My dear Dr Saha,

...You must have seen my statement about the question of partition. My own feeling is quite definite and so far as other colleagues in the Government are concerned, their view is also equally definite. I had gauged the feeling in Bengal and everyday I am getting confirmation that I had done it rightly. You may rest assured that, so far as we are concerned, we shall do our

best to secure partition of the predominantly non-Muslim areas from Muslim areas. Kindly do not hesitate to write to me if there is anything you consider it is necessary to communicate.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

34. Methods Adopted by the League to Garner Support

Letter from N. Dutt Mazumdar to Vallabhbhai Patel, 8 May 1947

SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 36–7.

P-20 Moti Jhil Colony
Dum Dum
Calcutta

My dear Sardarji,

The enclosed is the copy of a letter I have received by post from quarters obviously connected with the Muslim League. It will speak for itself. This is forwarded for your information as quite an interesting sample of methods which the votaries of Mr Jinnah's 'Pakistan' are seeking to adopt in Bengal to 'canvass' opinion in their favour.

Following this letter I have also received a leaflet in Bengali which warns that the loaded pistol is ready to correct us from the path of partition of Bengal and resistance against the creation of 'Pakistan'. A copy of this leaflet is also enclosed herewith for your information.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely
N. Dutt Mazumdar

ENCLOSURE

Axat Pakistan
S.S. Headquarters
Calcutta
30 April 1947

Mr Niharendu Dutt Mazumdar
Calcutta

S.S. Headquarters hereby request you that you immediately stop propaganda in support of 'Bengal partition'. Bengal must be an independent, sovereign and united state wherein there will be no distinction of class, creed and religion. But this independent state must be called 'Azad Pakistan' and the Muslims by virtue of their numerical strength will be the dominant power. Remember, Muslim Bengal is no more idle and busy after job-hunting. Youths of Muslim Bengal are now prepared to sacrifice their last drop of blood to attain and afterwards defend what they love to call 'Pakistan'.

S.S. Headquarters lastly warn you that if you continue to do the same the very existence of you will be at stake.

Azad Pakistan
[Illegible]
Sardar [Commander]

35. Call for Two Interim Ministries Pending Partition

Resolution by Villagers of 24-Parganas Districts Forwarded to S.P. Mookerjee, 9 May 1947

S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 141, Instalment II to IV, NMML.

THE HINDUS OF ABOUT FORTY VILLAGES MET AT A PUBLIC MEETING HELD AT BAKHRAHAT, 24 PARGANAS, BENGAL ON 9.5.47 UNDER THE PRESIDENSHIP OF MR J.N. MONDAL, BA

ALL SECTIONS OF THE HINDU COMMUNITY JOINED IN THIS MEETING

The meeting surveyed the present political situation of Bengal and dealt at large with the evils of communal policy pursued by the present Ministry of Bengal in all spheres of public life. It also discussed how by nefarious legislation the Ministry is bent on ruining the Hindus and destroying everything Hindu.

After much deliberation the following resolution were unanimously passed:

- (1) In view of the criminal barbarity in the shape of communal riot perpetrated in Calcutta, Noakhali, Dacca and other parts of the province and untold sufferings of the Hindus caused thereby and also in view of the inability or unwillingness of the present Bengal Ministry to put a stop to such state of things and apathy shown by it towards the Hindus it is resolved that this communal Ministry be removed immediately.
- (2) As peace and order ceased to exist in this province and lawlessness is reigning supreme in the name of law and order it is further resolved that the Bengal Hindus should have a separate administration within the Indian Union and as such demand a partition of the province into West Bengal consisting of the Presidency Division with Calcutta, Burdwan Division and the districts of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling, and East Bengal.
- (3) Be it also resolved that two zonal Ministries be formed during the interim period so long as the partition scheme is not given effect to.

Copy forwarded to Dr Shyamaprasad Mookerjee, for information, favour of sympathetic consideration.

J.N. Mondal
President of the Meeting

36. Stop Violence in Name of Religion

M.K. Gandhi's Interview with Abul Hashem at Sodepur, 10 May 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 442-4.

Hashem Saheb opened his case¹ by stating that Bengalis were after all Bengalis, whether Hindu or Muslim. They had a common language, a common culture and did not wish to be ruled by Pakistanis who lived a thousand miles away. Gandhiji said:

But haven't we been so long ruled by people who live seven thousand miles away?

Yes, but then that would mean that Pakistanis of the West would rule over us in Bengal.

But supposing they do not rule over you, and you wish to form a voluntary alliance with Pakistan because you have common religion which both of you wish to propagate throughout the world, then where is the objection?

But then you are talking of Pan-Islamism.

Yes I am. Perhaps you do not know how deep the Muslim feeling about it is I had evidence of that even while I was a student in England many years ago. What is then your objection to a voluntary federation of different countries professing the same religion?

Hashem Saheb did not reply.

Then Gandhiji asked me to bring a Bengali primer which he had been reading lately. When this was brought, Gandhiji proceeded to tell Hashem Saheb that, to all intents and purposes, he was trying to become a Bengali. He found hardly any difference between the language of a Bengali Hindu and a Bengali Muslim. Bengal was the only province in India where common Muslims did not understand Urdu. His intention in learning the Bengali language was to be able to read Gurudev's poems in the original, for, from them he received the message of the Upanishads, which lay at the root of the culture of the whole of India.

Hashem Saheb said that every Bengali looked upon Rabindranath with the highest veneration, and in this, Muslims were one with Hindus. That was the chief reason why Bengali Muslims did not want Bengal to be broken up into two.

It is the spirit of the Upanishads which binds Rabindranath to the whole of Indian culture. Does not Bengal derive her deepest culture from what is the priceless heirloom of all India? If that is so, and Bengal wishes to enter into voluntary association with the rest of India, what would you say about that?

Hashem Saheb had no reply for this question either.

You have not really made up your mind about Pakistan. Please think about it once more, and then we shall discuss the new proposal.

You are following the same path of non-violence as was followed by Lord Buddha and the Prophet. People consider you a reincarnation of these. You must extinguish the fire of violence in Calcutta. You must also do something so that our brethren in Bihar can live in peace.

First and foremost, it is a mistake to consider me a reincarnation of Buddha or of the Prophet. I have never made any such claim. I am an ordinary man. Of course I do try to follow the principles of life as preached by our scriptures and our great men. I have even succeeded to a certain extent. Yet, I do not claim that I am a person with divine qualities or higher than you. I am a servant of all human beings, be they Hindu or Muslim. I do wish I had the power to end the bloody strife raging among men and women of the same country. I should then be happy. Great men like Lord Krishna and Lord Buddha were so many incarnations of God. Our scriptures say that these great men had the divine power to establish peace and happiness. But you will realize that I am no divine person since I am not able to establish peace. And, if I presume to be such a person, I would not be able to survive in the world even for a minute. I have certainly been tested in my vows of truth and non-violence. That is why I have come here after touring Noakhali, Bihar, Delhi. I wish either to do something in this field or die. If you feel what Gandhi is doing is correct and Gandhi is needed in Calcutta I would first of all wish to make an humble request if you would allow me.

Yes, of course. You can command us to do anything.

The first thing is that if you are loyal to the party to which you belong and for which you work, you must ask Jinnah Saheb why, after signing the peace appeal with Gandhi, he is sitting in Delhi when thousands of Hindus are dying in the Punjab, the Frontier Province and Noakhali and thousands of women are being raped. Why should every worker belonging to your party not stand by the Hindus and protect them? If you are keen on saving the Muslims you will have to give protection to all these Hindus. And as far as you are concerned, you go and post

yourselves in Noakhali whether or not you get the orders from Jinnah Saheb. You must prove to the Hindus that they are your brothers and sisters and if any Muslims come to kill them in the name of religion, you would offer to die first and protect them, that their mothers, sisters and daughters are your mothers, sisters and daughters. Let me tell all three of you that if you prove it not by words but by your actions, you would uphold your religion, and bring glory to your organization and this would have its effect in the whole country and your leaders would shine out by such remarkable acts. Today your leaders and your organization stand discredited in the world. If you want to strengthen your organization, if you want to allow the Muslims of India to live in peace and happiness and unity, this is the only way and there is no other. I know very well that you are not going to be convinced by what I say. But I would be untrue to you if I did not tell you what appears truth to me. This is so because I consider you all as my brothers and my friends, and my duty as your friend and brother obliges me to speak to you the truth.

¹ Abul Hashem, Secretary, Bengal Provincial Muslim League, advocated the partition of India into Hindustan, Pakistan and United Sovereign Bengal.

37. Responsibility for Communal Violence

Gandhi's Interview with H.S. Suhrawardy, 11 May 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 452-3.

H.S. Suhrawardy, the chief sponsor of the united sovereign Bengal scheme, drew a rosy picture of the proposal. Gandhiji said that a new Bengal could not be born in utter disregard of the past. When the past was so full of wrongs, how could people believe in the sincerity of the new proposal unless past wrongs were set right? Suhrawardy said, his Government had been wholly impartial and equal justice had been meted out to all; otherwise how could it have the support of a large number of Hindus? Gandhiji expressed the opinion that this was no different from the argument of British imperialists.

A friend of mine had written a letter in which he described the utter incompetence of the Government and the veiled connivance of police officers in encouraging Muslim rioters. Gandhiji had read his letter and asked me now to hand it over to the Chief Minister. The latter went through it and said, 'Yes, it is a bad case. But I am sure, you realize that this is an exception.'

Then with Gandhiji's permission, I placed before Suhrawardy another case of murder in which the police had not taken up any enquiry even when seven days had passed. Suhrawardy tried to bypass the charge against his Government by saying, 'Do you know, there are more than half a dozen versions of that event? One even accuses me of complicity in the murder.' Gandhiji had been silently listening to our conversation. He now broke in by saying:

Yes, you are responsible not only for that murder but for every life lost in Bengal, whether Hindu or Muslim.

Suhrawardy immediately retorted, 'No, it is you who are responsible for it, for you have denied justice to the Mussalmans.'

I have rarely seen Gandhiji lose his temper in public. For one moment he flared up and said:

Don't talk rot!

But immediately he became restrained and calmed down. He told Shaheed [Suhrawardy] that if he was really serious about his new Bengal, he should go amongst the hooligans, wherever there was disturbance, and stop the mischief by risking his own life if necessary.

If you do it even for a day, it will transform the atmosphere—not only in Calcutta but in the whole of India.

38. 'Strong Condemnation of Move for Sovereign Bengal'

Extract from a Report from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 12 May 1947.

The Jatiya-Banga Mahasammelan which concluded its two day session at Singhi Park yesterday (Sunday) strongly condemned the recent move to carve out Bengal as an independent sovereign state and demanded immediate dissolution of the Muslim League Ministry in Bengal and formation of regional Ministries in its stead under a common Governor pending the creation of a new province of Bengal within the Indian Union.

The Mahasammelan sent the following wire to the Viceroy in this connection:

'Convention of 5,000 delegates of Presidency Division and Calcutta and attended by 50 MLA's and MLC's and several Constituent Assembly members unanimously adopts resolution strongly protesting creation of sovereign independent state in Bengal.'

Adopting resolutions to the above effect, the Convention pointed out that the cry for an independent sovereign Bengal was a sinister design to land the province in utter ruin, and a step towards that trap meant submission to the foisting of Pakistan in Bengal in future.

PARALLEL GOVT

As a measure to meet any future contingency which might be brought about by the British Government transferring power to the existing communal Government of Bengal, the Convention urged upon the people to form a parallel Government with the nationalist forces in the country and requested all the nationalist organizations to form a Joint Council of Action to take necessary steps in this regard.

In another resolution adopted, the Convention called upon Congress MLA's (Provincial and Central) and members of the Constituent Assembly who opposed partition of Bengal to resign their respective office if they could not see their way yet now to declare in unequivocal terms their support for the movement.

The Convention fixed May 15 as the 'Nationalist—Bengal Day' and appealed for its country-wide observance.

Sj Kalipada Mukherji, who presided over the concluding session in the absence of Dr Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, appealed to the delegates and visitors to exercise restraint so that the interruptions which marked the proceedings of the opening session could be avoided. Sj Mukerji's appeal was listened to and the day's proceedings were happy and smooth. All the resolutions were carried unanimously.

The first resolution, moved by Sj Narendra Nath Sen stated:

REGIONAL MINISTRIES

'The reactionary and anti-national policy adopted and pursued for over a decade by the Muslim League Ministry in Bengal made possible by the clever, deliberate device of the British Government has brought about ruin, disaster, misery and communal bitterness among the

people. It has failed to give any protection to the people, specially to the minority community and also to maintain law and order in the province. The communal Ministry has thus forfeited the confidence of the peace-loving people of Bengal. This convention, therefore, demands that the present Ministry be forthwith dissolved and in its place regional Ministries be at once set up under a common Governor pending the creation of a new province within the Indian Union.’...

39. ‘Retain Bengal for Bengalis’

Letter from M.K. Gandhi to H.S. Suhrawardy, 12/13 May 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, p. 460.

I recognize the seriousness of the position in Bengal in the matter of the partition. If you are absolutely sincere in your professions and would disabuse me of all the suspicion against you and if you would retain Bengal for the Bengalis—Hindus or Mussalmans—intact by non-violent means I am quite willing to act as your honorary private secretary and live under your roof till Hindus and Muslims begin to live as [the] brothers that they are.

Yours sincerely
M.K. GANDHI

40. United Bengal Should Be Based on ‘Mutual Consent’

Record of Gandhi’s Interview with S.P. Mookerjee at Sodepur, 13 May 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 464–5.

Shyamaprasad had heard that the scheme for united sovereign Bengal had received Gandhiji’s blessing. So he had come to ascertain the truth of the report. Gandhiji replied that he had not yet made up his mind about it but was trying to find out what the proposal really meant. Then he asked Shyamaprasad for his own opinion on the scheme.

Shyamaprasad began by saying that although Mr Suhrawardy was apparently its author, it was really being sponsored by the British commercial interests in Bengal. If Bengal were partitioned, it would create serious difficulties for the jute industry, for the mills would be in West Bengal and the raw materials in another State. Moreover, he said that the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, had personally asked him to give the proposal careful consideration. Gandhiji said:

So your objection is on account of its parentage! No, I want you to criticize the scheme on its merits.

The Shyamaprasad proceeded to say that although Mr Suharwardy was now sponsoring the cause of a united Bengal, yet once division had taken place, what was there to prevent this Bengal from seeking voluntary alliance with Pakistan? He could surely manipulate a decision of this kind by means of the majority of Muslim votes. Gandhiji said:

But has he not spoken of ‘mutual consent’ between Hindus and Muslims in the formation of a separate Bengal?

Shyamaprasad asked what difference that made so long as the majority of the Legislative Assembly were Muslims. Gandhiji replied:

But a decision by a simple numerical majority is not by ‘mutual consent’. I would interpret that term differently. It ought to mean that if a majority of Hindu members and a majority of

Muslim members agree to form a separate sovereign State, then it comes into being by 'mutual consent', not otherwise. That majority may be 51 to 49 or may be fixed at any other figure by mutual discussion before the agreement is entered into. And if Suhrawardy has to win the majority of the Hindu members of the Assembly over to his side, don't you see that the present communal situation in Bengal will immediately change for the better?

But supposing Suhrawardy does succeed in winning over many Hindu members and a separate state is formed, then one day, that state may federate itself with Pakistan if the decision is by majority of votes.

No. Such a decision should also be by 'mutual consent' as interpreted before separation from India.

Shyamaprasad then asked what would happen if the majority of Hindu members wanted to federate with India and the majority of Muslim members with Pakistan.

Then there would be a partition of Bengal. But that partition will be brought about by mutual agreement of the people of Bengal and not by the British. It is a partition by the British which has to be prevented at any cost.

But can you contemplate Bengal lying separated from the rest of India?

You ask me that question!

Finally, Gandhiji said to Shyamaprasad that we should take Mr Suhrawardy's new proposal at its face value, even if we may have no faith in him personally. Preservation of united Bengal in a united India should not be made the condition precedent in the present negotiation, that would defeat one's purpose. Having placed faith in the *bona fides* of Mr Suhrawardy's proposal for a united Bengal, we should work out its logical implications. An admission that Bengali Hindus and Bengali Mussalmans were one would really be a severe blow against the two nation theory of the League. If therefore Mr Suhrawardy was prepared to accept the real meaning of the term 'mutual consent', it would mean either the end of the League or of Mr Suhrawardy.

41. 'Future of Bengal'

Extract from an Editorial in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 13 May 1947.

Since his arrival in Calcutta on Friday last Gandhiji has been meeting some political leaders and discussing with them, it is reported, the question of the desirability and possibility of a united, sovereign Bengal. It is also reported that some scheme or schemes are being discussed at these meetings. We have no authoritative accounts of what these schemes are nor do we know Gandhiji's reactions to these schemes. Neither have we knowledge if these leaders have been authorized by any political organizations to discuss plans for a united, sovereign Bengal or enter into negotiations with each other for that purpose. If they have not been so authorized, we would like to know on whose behalf they are discussing the plans they are reported to be doing. These reported happenings, which seem enveloped in mystery, have naturally caused serious misgivings among large numbers of Bengalee nationalists.

What impressions Gandhiji has formed during his brief stay in Calcutta we do not know. But we may tell him that nationalist Bengal is today definitely and emphatically in favour of a partition of Bengal. They believed in the absolute unity of India as a whole, politically and economically. Even a year ago Bengalee nationalists could not think in terms of a division of this province. Somehow or other they reconciled themselves to the rule—the apter word

would be misrule—of the League Government which started in the year 1937. But today, by a strange but dismal turn of events since August last year, the position has completely changed. We need not go into those events here—they are so very well-known. To-day Bengalee nationalists feel in their heart of hearts—and quite rightly—that in the formation of a separate West Bengal Province of theirs within the Indian Union lies their only salvation. There is no other way. This is the belief passionately entertained by an overwhelming majority of Bengalee nationalists. This is conclusively evidenced by the views expressed by the nationalist Press in Bengal, by hundreds of public meetings held in different parts of the country and by opinions expressed by thousands of knowledgeable men in the columns of newspapers. With a little effort Gandhiji can easily ascertain the truth of what we have stated above.

....But the minority community and all others who do not subscribe to the theory of ‘a change of masters’ must live and have a secure home. For ten years they have tried to adjust themselves to the tyrannical rule of a brute majority. They have already given a fair trial to Gandhiji’s advice to rely on the protection afforded by the majority community. The result is seen in carnage, arson, slaughter and dishonour of women folk. A very high price has already been paid by the minority community in its effort to live in brotherly amity together with fellowmen of the majority community. Things have now reached such a pass that the two must henceforth live apart if they are to live at all.

We tell Mr Suhrawardy that it is no use for him to talk sweet and big. The poison he has so well helped to spread has become such a Frankenstein that it can crush him the moment it is convinced that he means what he professes to avert a Pakistanic calamity. It is equally useless for him to plead that he was not warned in time of this future development. All he has done so far is to abuse the ‘Hindu’ press and ‘Hindu’ leaders and drive the anti-Hindu poison deeper into the minds of Bengalee Muslims through administrative acts. Mahatma Gandhi is surely perfectly aware of all this, and no opportunist stratagem can deceive him as to the true state of things. Partition, as we have remarked, is not a pleasure; it has become an unavoidable necessity.

42. Opposition to Suhrawardy’s Plans

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to K.C. Neogy, 13 May 1947

SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 39–40.

My dear Neogy,

I have received your letter of the 11th instant. You must have noticed from the activities of Mr Suhrawardy in Calcutta that he is considerably unnerved by the agitation of partition of Bengal which is sure to separate Calcutta from Eastern Bengal which is destined to be the League portion of Pakistan if it persists in its demand. I am afraid this cry of a sovereign independent Bengal is a trap in which even Kiran Shankar [Roy] may fall with Sarat Babu. The only way to save the Hindus of Bengal is to insist on partition of Bengal and to listen to nothing else. That is the only way to bring the Muslim League in Bengal to its senses.

I am aware of the threat which Suhrawardy has given in his statement and which he may try to execute in the event of partition, but we shall take all possible precautions to prevent such a catastrophe. At present unfortunately the proposed announcement has been postponed

for a fortnight and during that period the tension and war of nerves will continue but there is no help. I trust you are having the full benefit of the exuberating climate of Simla Hills.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely
Vallabhbhai Patel

43. Nehru Disapproves of Sovereign Bengal

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to S.P. Mookerjee, 14 May 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 147–8.

New Delhi

My dear Dr Mookerjee,

I have your letter of the 11th May. All the considerations that you have mentioned have been before us. Naturally I cannot say with any definiteness what is going to happen. I do not personally appreciate at all the idea of a sovereign Bengal unconnected with the Union.

Any notional division of the province for the purpose of deciding about the future must necessarily be based on some simple rule which presumably is related to the census figures of population. Final boundaries can only be settled by a Boundary Commission.

As you must know, the date of the so-called Conference has been postponed to the 2nd June. The Congress Working Committee is meeting on the 31st May in Delhi. I think it will be advantageous if you could be in Delhi round about that time. In any event you will probably have to come up for the meeting of the Constituent Assembly Union Principles Committee.

Yours sincerely
Jawaharlal Nehru

44. Bengal Hindus Persist with Demand for Partition

Telegram from V.D. Savarkar to S.P. Mookerjee, 15 May 1947
S.P. Mookerjee Papers, File No. 141, Instalment II to IV, NMML.

DR SHYAMAPRASAD MUKERJI 77 ASHUTOSH MOOKERJEE ROAD CALCUTTA.

PLEASE BROADCAST THE FOLLOWING IN BENGAL STOP LET BENGALI HINDUS BEWARE OF THE SCHEMING PLATITUDES AND PROMOSLEM DESIGNS OF GANDHIJI WHO STARTED FOR BENGAL STRAIGHT AFTER HIS INTERVIEW WITH MR JINNAH AND AVOWING OPEN HOSTILITY TOWARDS THE DEMAND FOR FRAMING A HINDU MAJORITY PROVINCE IN BENGAL STOP NO COMPROMISE SHOULD DUPE US INTO ABANDONING THAT DEMAND AS MOSLEMS ARE SURE TO REPUDIATE THEIR PART AS SOON AS ARE TRAPPED STOP PAKISTAN OR NO PAKISTAN WE MUST HAVE NEW HINDU PROVINCE IN BENGAL PUNJAB AND SIND IN THE INTEREST OF AKHAND BHARAT ITSELF STOP FOR EVEN IF THE IMPOSSIBLE HAPPENS AND BRITAIN CONCEDES INTEGRITY OF INDIA UNDER A STRONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT THE NEW HINDU MAJORITY PROVINCE IN BENGAL CAN ONLY SERVE US AS A FAITHFUL SENTRY CHECKMATING ANY FURTHER TREACHEROUS ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF MOSLEM MAJORITY THERE STOP ON OTHER HAND IN CASE PAKISTAN THRUST ON US BY BRITAIN THE CREATION OF THESE PROVINCES SHALL FORM AN UNBROKEN LINK OF HINDU MAJORITY PROVINCES FROM EAST PUNJAB TO WEST BENGAL AND WITH THE HINDU KINGDOM OF NEPAL AND KASHMERE IN THE NORTH AND HINDU ASSAM IN THE EAST WOULD

CONSOLIDATE HINDUDOM AS NOTHING ELSE CAN AT PRESENT DO PROVIDED OF COURSE THAT WE HINDUS ALL POLITICS AND MILITARISE HINDUDOM

SAVARKAR

45. Adopting Term 'Socialist Republic' Debars Bengal from Commonwealth

Extract from a Letter from Louis Mountbatten to J.F. Burrows, 16 May 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 18, NMML.

...3. On my return from Simla on the 14th May I had a long talk with Suhrawardy and his Minister for Land and Land Revenue. Suhrawardy told me that, as a result of our previous conversation and the one that I had had with K.S. Roy, they had been having discussions about retaining the unity of Bengal. He added that Sarat Chandra Bose had also joined in the conversation.

4. He said that they had made good progress and on the whole he was hopeful as to the result. He did not mention to me, however, that the document which Bose and Roy had handed to him, but of which I fortunately had already procured a copy myself, contained in its opening clause the words that 'Bengal was to be a Socialist Republic'.

5. I tackled him about this and told him that obviously if the term 'Socialist Republic' were to be adopted now it would debar their entry into the British Commonwealth, whatever the rest of India might decide to do, and that if they wished to turn to any big power, the only one that I could think of if they insisted on calling it a 'Socialist Republic' would be the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. I went on to say that surely if they wished to be independent, it would be quite enough for them to call themselves 'Bengal' and, if necessary, describe themselves as a 'Free State'. When they had formed their Constitution they could call themselves anything they liked, but it was silly to prejudge the issue at this stage. I drew Suhrawardy's attention to the recent statement by Patel on Dominion Status, and suggested to him that until the situation was cleared up it seemed to me the greatest mistake possible for them to call themselves a Socialist Republic.

6. I went on to tell him that in the most recent correspondence with HMG the suggestion was that provinces or parts of provinces not in A Group were going to be given the option of voting for Hindustan or Pakistan and not the option of remaining independent, but if, of course, the Bengal Legislative Assembly were to pass a resolution asking for independence and give it to you, I knew that you would pass it on to me with your recommendations and that I should judge the case in the light of what you said.

7. I finally told him that if any agreement were to be reached by the Hindus and Muslims in Bengal on a coalition Government basis, I would urge the leaders of the Congress and Muslim League High Commands to accept it, and knew that Gandhi would help. If this were done by the 2nd June I would do my utmost to obtain the agreement of the leaders that the final announcement should contain no reference to the partition of Bengal.

8. I warned him that Nehru was not in favour of an independent Bengal unless closely linked to Hindustan, as he felt that a partition now would anyhow bring East Bengal in to Hindustan in a few years.

9. Suhrawardy finished by referring once again to the question that, if the words 'Socialist Republic' were cut out and Bengal asked to remain within the British Commonwealth, whether

I would be prepared to support such a proposal. I told him that my position remained the same, that in no circumstances would I recommend to HMG that Bengal should be allowed to come into the Commonwealth unless the bulk of India were to make a similar request.

10. I beg of you to use all your influence on Suhrawardy, Bose and Roy not to use the phrase 'Socialist Republic' or anything like it until the Constituent Assembly has met later on, because, as I said in paragraph 5, it would be the greatest mistake, in the light of Patel's recent statement on Dominion Status, for Bengal to declare itself a Socialist Republic until the situation has been cleared up, and until it can be definitely seen whether the Indian Union is going to remain within the British Empire, which now seems to be a likely eventuality....

46. Sovereign Bengal Poses Dangers to Indian Union

Letter from Binoy Kumar Roy to Vallabhbhai Patel, 16 May 1947

SPC, Vol. IV, p. 42.

74A South Sinthee Road
P.O. Ghughudanga
Calcutta

Respected Sardar V.J. Patel,

I beg to be excused for again troubling you with this. But the unhappy and dangerous situation that is being created by some so-called Congress leaders forces me to place before you some facts for your kind consideration.

I had occasion to write to you just after August [1946] killings of Calcutta how the Muslim League tried to impose Pakistan in Bengal and by what methods.

A situation more dangerous is now arising in Bengal and Mr Sarat Chandra Bose, who has more ambition than sense, is responsible for this. Mr Kiran Shankar Roy has also joined hands with Mr Bose in creating a free undivided Bengal. These people have joined hands with the Muslim League. But the Hindu public of West Bengal are very strongly in favour of partition. The betrayal of these so-called Congress leaders has come as a shock to the public under the circumstances. Please try to come to Bengal and rescue Bengal from the clutches of these traitors. These leaders forget that they are helping the Britishers by their unholy game.

The British diplomacy to create a weak Union Centre by combining opposing forces in undivided India having failed, it is trying to win away more areas from the jurisdiction of the Union State of India.

If Bengal is made free today, Assam will be forced to follow suit, since Assam does not possess direct communication with the Indian Union.

Eastern Pakistan will, in course of time, grow upon the ashes of Bengal and Assam.

Please, under these circumstances, come and visit Bengal. I can assure you that your presence will bring solidarity in Hindu ranks. For heaven's sake do come to Bengal once.

Yours faithfully,
Binoy Kumar Roy



47. Impossible for Hindus to Live under League Government

Letter from Abala Bose to Rajendra Prasad, 17 May 1947

R.P. Papers, File No. 6-I/45-6-7, NAI.

93 Upper Circular Road
Calcutta

Dear Dr Rajendra Prasad,

I have been reading with keen interest your speeches on the cooperative movement delivered in Madras, and as I am interested in the movement, having established a Women's Cooperative Industrial Home in Calcutta, I thought I might write about our difficulties.

I established the Home with the help of the Government of India. I happened to know Sri Biswanath Das, late Premier of Orissa, and asked him to come and see our work. He was so impressed that when a Conference of Premiers was held in Delhi he kindly recommended the grant. So we owe our organization entirely to his sympathy and help. At present this grant is distributed by the Bengal Government through the Cooperative Department of Bengal. We established the Home to train workers and send them to their villages and open cooperative industrial societies among the women. Our work was progressing splendidly and we were thinking of opening markets abroad when the war began and everything was upset. Our house was taken by the military, our workers left for their villages. We began anew after the war ended but the Calcutta massacre again stopped everything. We are trying to revive again but now the difficulty is to get yarn. Our agent goes to the Textile Department to get permit for our quota and has to return without it. This goes on from day to day and he sees people who can bribe the officer-in-charge to get a permit whereas our man is refused an interview. I am writing this to you as your Government is carrying on a drive against corruption. Our Government is steeped in corruption, and there is no hope for us, unless we are masters of our destiny. This can only happen with a divided Bengal. It breaks our heart to think of dividing our beloved Bengal but there seems to be no other alternative.

People like us who are surrounded by the majority community and have witnessed the August massacre can't think of any way of escape except division. Neighbours with whom we have lived as friends for so many years seem to turn into brutes through communal passions. Hindus are traditionally pacifists, but their character is fast changing. If things go on like this there will be nothing left of our culture.

It pains the Congress-minded masses in Bengal that Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee is giving us the right lead and not the Bengal Congress, some of whom have even joined S. J. Sarat Bose, a renegade from Congress. It was not my intention to write to you in this strain, but all our thoughts are turned to our future. This is certain that we can't live under the League Government.

All our thoughts are turned to our leaders in Delhi for we have no reliance on Bengal leaders.

Yours sincerely,
Abala Bose



48. Report from Bengal Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bengal for the First Half of May 1947, 17 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI.

Political.

....4. The strenuous attempt that has been made in certain political quarters to wean the Hindus and Muslims away both from partition and Pakistan and to form a united sovereign Bengal has had a very mixed reception. The general opinion, as at present known, is that the proposal has come too late: if it was to have had any chance of success it should have been put forward at least a year ago. As it is, organized Hindu opinion, including almost the entire Hindu press, is committed to the cause of partition, with its corollary of a union of West Bengal with India proper. Certain of the Muslim League leaders too are apparently far from prepared to abandon, at this stage, their claim to the Pakistan known to them.

5. The attempt to put forward a substitute for partition, a substitute which might be thought to be alluring to some at least of the Hindus of the Province and which, having regard to the national characteristics of the Bengalees, would, in normal times, probably have made a very definite appeal has caused the protagonists of partition to redouble their efforts to achieve their aim. In Calcutta the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha has taken steps to speed up the preliminary steps for the foundation of a separate Hindu State including the general passing of resolutions supporting the proposal. For this purpose it is proposed to launch a systematic campaign against all proposals for a united Bengal and, as part of the plan, take the following steps—raise a fund of Rs 10 lakhs, recruit one lakh of volunteers and to impart the training necessary to meet any national emergency, stir up public opinion against the alleged barbarities committed by the Muslims and the police, form a separate Legislative Assembly with the present pro-partition Congress MLAs and form a provisional Government and make a formal declaration of the establishment of a new Bengal State. It is proposed to impress on Mr Gandhi that only a united stand by the Hindus of Bengal for the immediate partition of the Province can prevent disaster. A series of meetings have been held during the period in Calcutta in support of the general partition theme. At the first day's session of the Jatiya Banga Mahasammelan on 10th May, at which some 10,000 persons were present including a thousand delegates from the Presidency and Burdwan Divisions, speeches were made and resolutions were passed in support of the proposition that a separate Province united with those territories which wish to come under the all-India Union should be formed. Opportunity was also taken by the Mahasabha, by the observance of Independence Day on the same date, to stress the same ideas, and at a meeting presided over by Dr Shyamaprasad Mookerjee, at which some 10,000 people were present, a demand for the partition of the Province was made; any pact with the Chief Minister was repudiated and the audience was called upon to bring the membership of the Hindusthan National Guards up to at least one lakh volunteers. An indication was also given that if the partition of Bengal was not effected through constitutional channels they would have to fight for it.

6. The series of unfortunate events which culminated in the passing by the Corporation of a resolution in favour of partition provided further arguments for those in favour of cutting off all connection with the Muslim League.

7. Muslim League leaders have been vocal on several occasions against the attempt by the Chief Minister and Mr Sarat Chandra Bose to form a united sovereign Bengal and have made it perfectly clear that they are not prepared to modify their previously expressed demand for Pakistan—involving the handing over of an undivided Bengal. As can be imagined this open divergence of view has caused very considerable confusion of thought in Muslim League circles—the general consensus of opinion being that Mr Jinnah must and will have the final say so far as the Muslims are concerned.

8. The suggestion that an Anti-Partition Day should be held to synchronise with the Independence Day of May the 10th fell flat and the Muslims did not observe the day. Shops and other business concerns remained open as usual and there was no demonstration or disturbance.

9. In the Divisions, too—West Bengal in particular—the pros and cons of partition have been the main matter of interest. In West Bengal the movement for partition continues to gain momentum and all districts report growing evidence in favour of the scheme. A large number of meetings have been held, including one at Serampore at the end of last month attended by 20,000 persons. No reaction has, however, been noted to the conciliatory attitude adopted by the Chief Minister and other leaders sponsoring the idea of a united sovereign Bengal. In the Presidency Division meetings of Hindus in urban areas in support of the partition proposal continue to be held. In North Bengal speculation generally favours partition. In Dacca, where the Nawab is attempting to regain his hold on the Divisional capital, local politics held the field but in Chittagong there is interest in the idea and a general belief that the Province will be partitioned.

10. In face of the, at present, intense interest in the whole future of the Province, interest in the political happenings in Calcutta city has very considerably abated following, and perhaps as a result of, the very definite improvement in the situation in the city.

49. 'Bengal Muslims Will Fight Partition Move—Maulana Akram'

Dawn, 19 May 1947.

NEW DELHI, Sunday.—Muslim Bengal is positively against the division of Bengal. I can assure everyone concerned with the question of separation that the Muslims of Bengal will fight against it united like a solid rock, said Maulana Mohammad Akram Khan, President of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League in an interview to the Orient Press of India here today.

He added, 'partition of Bengal can be affected only on the corpses of the Muslims of Bengal. But we may consider the proposal provided this procedure is adopted as a matter of principle in all small zones and pockets where the Muslims are in a majority in the Hindu dominated provinces.'

He said that as far as the internal politics of the Muslim League in Bengal were concerned there was no difference of opinion between the Provincial Muslim League and the Ministry.

Continuing, he said that the Committee appointed by the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League to negotiate with the Hindu leaders did not make progress as the gulf between the two parties was too wide and the terms and conditions for compromise put forth by one party were not acceptable to the other.

Referring to the Sovereign United Bengal question he said that he would not support any proposal that was not in consonance with the scheme outlined in the Lahore Resolution of the All-India Muslim League.

Concluding he said that shortly after the arrival of Bengal Muslim League Leaders in Calcutta, the Working Committee of the Provincial League would be convened and informed of the talks they had today with the Qaed-e-Azam. —OPI.

50. 'No Agreement on Future Bengal Constitution Yet'

Dawn, 19 May 1947.

CALCUTTA, Sunday.—'No agreement has yet been reached between the Bengal Muslim League and Congress leaders on the future constitution of Bengal,' says Mr Fazlur Rahman, Revenue Minister, in a statement today.

Mr Rahman, who visited Delhi last week with Mr H.S. Suhrawardy, the Bengal Premier, and held discussions on the question with members of the League High Command, says:

'We have the reactions of the Qaed-e-Azam to the discussions. Further talks will be carried on in the light of these reactions, and if at any time an agreement is arrived at it will be placed before the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League for its approval. If approved by it the whole matter will be placed before the High Command of the All-India Muslim League'.

Summing up the proposals arising from the discussions which have not, however, yet been agreed to, Mr Rahman says they are as follows:

- (1) Bengal to be a sovereign Socialist Republic. The Socialist Republic of Bengal will decide its relations with the rest of India.
- (2) The Bengal Legislature, after the constitution is framed and put into force should be elected on the basis of adult franchise and joint electorate.
- (3) On paras 1 and 2 being accepted by both the parties and on Bengal being declared by His Majesty's Government as an independent state, the present Ministry will be dissolved and an Interim Government will be formed consisting of equal numbers of Muslims and Hindus (including the Scheduled Caste Hindus) but excluding the Chief Minister, who will be a Muslim. The Home Minister shall be a Hindu.
- (4) The Interim Government will give Hindus, including Scheduled Castes and Muslims equal share in the services.
- (5) The British Government shall transfer power to the Interim Government on or before June 1948.
- (6) An Ad Hoc constitution making body consisting of 30 persons, 16 Muslims and 14 Hindus, will be set up by the Muslim League and the Congress respectively to frame a constitution.—API

51. Appeal to Stand United with Congress

Extract from a Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Sarat Bose, 22 May 1947

SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 44–5.

Mussoorie

My dear Sarat,

...I am sorry to find that you have isolated yourself so completely from all-India politics and even in provincial politics you have not kept in touch with us. In these critical times, we cannot

afford to be standoffish and must pool our resources and take a united stand. Vital matters which will leave their mark on generations to come have to be settled, and in such settlement it behoves all of us to contribute our best to the combined strength of the Congress. I do hope that you will take a broader share in all-India politics and will keep us in touch with your activities both in regard to all-India and in regard to provincial politics.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

52. Division of India Makes Partition of Punjab and Bengal Imperative

Extract from a Letter from Rajendra Prasad to Abala Bose, 22 May 1947

R.P. Papers, File No. 6-I/45-6-7, NAI.

1 Queen Victoria Road
New Delhi

My dear revered Lady Bose,

...You might have seen in the papers that I have personally very strongly supported the division of Bengal if India is to be divided. So far as we are concerned, we here are unanimously of opinion that there is no other way except to divide Punjab and Bengal if the League insists upon the division of India. The whole matter is under the active consideration of the British Government and we shall get definite information about the attitude of the British Government when Lord Mountbatten returns next week. I can fully visualize and appreciate the situation in Bengal and should do everything that I personally can to be of any service. So far as the official Congress in Bengal is concerned, I understand that the Provincial Committee supports the proposal for division. I have met Sjt Surendra Mohan Ghosh, President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, on several occasions and he told me that the Congressmen, barring Sjt Sarat Chandra Bose and some of his co-workers, are all in favour of division. But, of course, Sarat Babu has a position in public life and I am afraid his attitude is causing a misunderstanding of the position in Bengal. From the talk that I have had with all friends whom I have met, I gather that Sjt Sarat Chandra Bose is practically isolated and has no support for his viewpoint in Bengal. But Europeans and others, who are interested against the partition of Bengal, are making capital out of Sjt Sarat Chandra Bose's opposition. That is unfortunate. We shall do what we can from here.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad



53. Bengal to Be Partitioned

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Binoy Kumar Roy, 23 May 1947
SPC, Vol. IV, p. 43.

Camp Birla House
Mussoorie

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 16th instant.

You are unnecessarily taking an alarmist view of the situation. Shri Kiran Shankar Roy is coming to Delhi on the 28th instant to meet me. I do not think he will do anything against the advice of the Congress High Command. Nor have we reason to apprehend any scheming or interference from British diplomacy.

Bengal cannot be isolated from the Indian Union. Talk of the idea of a sovereign republic of independent Bengal is a trap to induce the unwary and unwise to enter into the parlour of the Muslim League. The Congress Working Committee is fully aware of the situation in Bengal, and you need not be afraid at all. Bengal has got to be partitioned, if the non-Muslim population is to survive.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

54. No Hindu Support for Anti-Partition Movement

Letter from H.S. Suhrawardy to Liaquat Ali Khan, 23 May 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 864–5.

BENGAL SECRETARIAT, CALCUTTA
23 May 1947

My dear Liaquat Ali Sahib,

I hope to come to Delhi on the 25th or the 26th. Representatives of the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League will also come up with Maulana Akram Khan about the 30th or the 31st.

I have had more chances of judging the situation. There is not the ghost of a chance of winning in any fight once the partition is announced. Even before the partition is announced, it is impossible to arouse Hindu public opinion against it. The Hindu leaders, Mr Sarat Chandra Bose and Mr K.S. Roy are indeed taking a great risk in setting their face against partition. They do not hope to be able to convince their community but they hope to be able to induce their High Command to agree. I think they deserve great honour and respect for their courage. We have not been able to touch a single Scheduled Caste member yet and not one of them has come forward to say that he is in sympathy with the non-partition movement.

Even the Hindus of East Bengal, who do not count in the voting, are supporting the partition with death staring them in the face.

Even the talk of partition has led to a recrudescence of riots in Calcutta, and when it is announced then two things might happen—either the Muslims of Calcutta will succumb and

accept or they will fight—and if Calcutta passes into the hands of the Hindus, they will be decimated.

More when we meet.

Yours sincerely,
H.S. Suhrawardy

55. Bengal Must Not Be Partitioned

Letter from Liaquat Ali Khan to M.A. Jinnah, 24 May 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 867–73.

NEW DELHI

My dear Mr Jinnah,

Here are two more letters from Mr Suhrawardy. They arrived today.

I am leaving for Lahore this afternoon and will be back either Monday or Tuesday morning.

Yours sincerely,
Liaquat Ali Khan

Enclosure

H.S. Suhrawardy to Liaquat Ali Khan

BENGAL SECRETARIAT, CALCUTTA
21 May 1947

My dear Liaquat Ali Sahib,

I have had a talk with Maulana Akram Khan. I feel that I must once more impress upon the Quaid-i-Azam through you the disaster that will overtake us if Bengal is partitioned or if the partition of Bengal is announced on the 2nd June, that is to say, if we cannot come to an agreement before the 2nd of June. He seems to think that the Quaid-i-Azam feels that any settlement with the Hindus here or the local Congress, which will of course have to be ratified by the High Commands, will mean that we are giving up our principles—referring probably to the Two Nation Theory or to Bengal being declared a Muslim zone or to Bengal from the beginning forming part and parcel of a Pakistan Federation. Now my submission is this, that we are not compromising our principles in any way by coming to an agreement for Bengal, and even if we do, the compromise will be of such a minor nature that it will be expedient to make that compromise in view of the terrible disaster that will overwhelm Bengal, and particularly the Muslims of Bengal, if Bengal is partitioned. I wish to expand this. The Lahore Resolution visualized Independent Sovereign States of those areas where the Muslims are in a majority, with such readjustments, etc. This in practice came down to provincial boundaries to start with. Hence a Free State of Bengal subscribes to this criterion. Nowhere do I find it stated that there must be a declaration from the beginning that it will be Pakistan or that it should form part of a Federation of Pakistan States. So, what principles after all are we compromising? As regards joint electorate within the agreement, the present formula is equivalent practically to separate electorate, and it may surprise you to know that

our formula of joint electorate with adult franchise unadulterated has alarmed the Hindu leaders who are demanding reservation of seats in proportion to the population, giving us therefore a statutory majority. Also the formula which has been accepted means practically separate electorate. It keeps their face, namely, their demand for joint electorate, and at the same time it gives us what we want, namely, separate electorate. Joint Ministries have, as I have said over and over again, been treated as an all-India issue. But when India is definitely going to be partitioned into Zone 'A' and Zone 'B' and we are pulling out, each one framing its own Constitution, then we may be left to frame ours, and the manner in which we settle our affairs will not affect the Ministries either of Zone 'A' or of Zone 'B'. And what after all is the alternative unless we come to an agreement now? It would appear that the Quaid-i-Azam intends to fight against the partition inch by inch even after the declaration, that is to say that he will fight in the Legislative Assembly, in the Notional Assemblies and even at the time of a referendum which he hopes will be granted but the Viceroy has reiterated over and over again cannot be conceded. Now may I say with great respect that there is no hope whatsoever of retrieval if partition is declared on the 2nd of June. We may force a non-partition resolution in the Assembly, but this is valueless as there will be Notional Assemblies. In the Notional Assembly of the Hindu-majority areas composed of the present Members of the Legislature or of Members elected by the present Members of the Legislature on the basis of one for a million or one for two millions, there is absolutely no hope of getting a single Hindu vote in our favour. Even if we today arouse a volume of opinion amongst the Scheduled Castes—and I can tell you that the task is extremely uphill and except two meetings in the Burdwan Division it has not been possible to hold more, and the Scheduled Caste workers are ever afraid to go amongst the Scheduled Castes in the Burdwan Division, and they want protection and they want officers to support them—even if we were able to arouse Scheduled Caste public opinion in any degree or form, the present representatives of the Scheduled Castes or those that will be elected by the present representatives will all vote in favour of partition. Further, once partition is announced, there will be no hope of trying to get Hindu opinion in our favour, Scheduled Castes or Caste. The propaganda of the Scheduled Castes in our favour will be that they will be divided, hence there should not be a partition. This is weak against the propaganda of the Hindus, namely, that 'we Hindus of these areas, both Caste and Scheduled Caste, will govern together and have a great Hindu province which will be linked to the Hindu provinces of the rest of India and which will dominate over the Muslims, a province which will be rich in resources and which we shall not surrender'. Please realize that this partition will give to the Western Bengal Hindus such a great victory that they will not give up an inch of ground once the partition is announced. So, neither shall we win in the Notional Assemblies, nor is there any hope of winning even if a referendum is given at a subsequent stage. And what I am telling you is an absolute fact which everyone here knows, and let there be no misconception regarding this. I repeat, once the partition is announced there is not the slightest hope of getting Hindu opinion from any section against that partition. West Bengal, which will be Hindu-dominated, will be rich in resources, and why should they agree to link themselves up with a large rural population with the prospect of utilizing their resources for the benefit of the rural population and with the further prospect of being dominated by Muslims, whereas they can utilize all those resources for their own wealth and development and at the same time save themselves from Muslim domination? I use the word 'domination' because, if all these things are not being done by agreement but

are based upon a struggle, that will be the result in spite of all that we may say about treating the Hindu minorities fairly and squarely and everybody having a share in the administration. And what will be the disaster? If there is a struggle, nothing can save the Muslims of West Bengal from being wiped out, and nothing can save the Hindus of East Bengal, even the Scheduled Caste Hindus, from being wiped out. I am including the Scheduled Castes also because, however much we may try and differentiate between Caste and Scheduled Caste Hindus, there is no differentiation made where there is a communal struggle, as is evidenced by the fact that the Muslims attacked the Scheduled Caste Hindus in Tippera and Noakhali, and the Hindus attacked the Congress Muslims and killed them in Calcutta and Bihar. Now no Government is powerful enough to be able to save this province however much we may try. Before Government's resources can be mobilized—and these resources are really peace-time resources—the mischief will have been done and the massacre already enacted. If we use the army, what is the army we are getting here? It is all a Hindu army. It would seem as if there are no Muslims in the army; and while they talk about the army being free from communalism, they will not send Muslim troops to Bengal. So, the army will not come to our help but will actually work against us.

So much for life and death. Then comes the condition of East Bengal. I have in a previous letter told you how absolutely unprepared East Bengal is for a struggle for existence. I will not repeat it here. Please once more refer to the previous letter. If North Bengal also goes to the Hindus, namely, the area of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling and the top portion of Dinajpur (which may go to them when a Boundary Commission is set up), then one more commodity, namely, tea, also goes to them. What will be left of East Bengal will be an area absolutely deficit in food grains, and by the time other Muslim areas or surplus areas send foodgrains to us, the Muslims of East Bengal will be dead; they will have to pass not through one famine but through several famines, and I can quite visualize that within six months of the partition the Muslims of East Bengal will be kneeling before West Bengal or before Group A or before the Congress to be taken into their fold. What else, after all, is the alternative? So, will you please give some thought to the problem of Bengal and discuss this matter with the Quaid-i-Azam? Pakistan having been gained, is it not worthwhile that we should consolidate our gains? Will you also realize that with the partition cry having been raised, how difficult indeed it is to induce the Hindus to co-operate with us on the basis of a Free State of Bengal? But some who have vision and some who do not wish to hold themselves responsible for the murder of Hindus and Muslims, that will surely follow if Bengal is partitioned, are prepared to come to an agreement with us. For Heaven's sake let us take advantage of this. And now there will be only one snag; it may be a very big snag but it will be a snag for which we shall not be responsible either before God or [before] man or before our own conscience; and that is that the Congress High Command, in its dream of giving a blow to Pakistani Bengal and in its dream of dominating the Muslims in one section of Bengal, may not agree to the agreement arrived at between ourselves. If so, all that can be said is that we have done our best, and we or the Muslim League will not be held responsible for the horrors that will follow. Secondly, if we had agreed and if the Quaid-i-Azam also says that he is prepared to agree on these terms and if the Congress stands out, then it may well be that the Viceroy may not announce the partition of Bengal in view of the unreasonableness of the Congress attitude; it may well be too that the Viceroy may force the Congress to yield. But let us not, for fear that the Congress High Command may not accept, also fail to do our bit. The Quaid-i-Azam has always been brave and courageous to do the

right thing, and although the Congress High Command has not accepted, he has come out in shining glory because he has done the right thing and without considering whether the Congress will accept or not.

Please, may I have an answer?

Yours sincerely,
H.S. Suhrawardy

56. Sovereign Bengal a Sinister Move from Muslim League

Letter from P.N. Banerjea to Rajendra Prasad, 27 May 1947

G.G. (Reforms), F.N. 41/3/47- R, Part IV, NAI.

INDIAN ASSOCIATION
62, BOWBAZAR STREET,
Calcutta

Dear Dr Rajendra Prasad,

I am enclosing a copy of the Resolution passed at a meeting of the Council of the Indian Association held on the 26th instant.

I shall leave for Delhi tomorrow and will take the earliest opportunity of meeting you to discuss the Bengal situation.

I trust you are keeping good health.

Yours sincerely,
P.N. Banerjea

The following Resolution was passed at a meeting of the Council of the Indian Association held on the 26th May 1947:

The Indian Association has given its serious consideration to the Free State plan for Bengal as adumbrated in the Bose-Hashim agreement and come to the conclusion that its object is not only to defeat the almost unanimous demand of the Hindus and other nationalists for the creation of a separate autonomous province in Bengal as an integral part of the Indian Union, but is also a clever and sinister move to hand over the whole of the province to Pakistan in a stealthy and surreptitious manner. This move has been strongly condemned by all the non-Muslim newspapers of the province which have any circulation and rejected outright at all the representative conferences and largely attended meetings which have been recently held. The plan has thus received no support and is unworthy of consideration of His Excellency the Viceroy and His Majesty's Government. The Indian Association strongly support the nationalist demand that all non-Muslim majority areas in Bengal be kept out of Eastern Pakistan and incorporated into a separate province within the Indian Union.

The Association desires to point out that the communal situation in Calcutta and some other parts of Bengal is steadily deteriorating. The depredations of the Muslim League volunteers and the atrocities perpetrated by the Muslim Armed Police are daily increasing. The use of firearms by Muslim League volunteers and hooligans is another serious feature of the situation. Business is almost at a standstill, and a large number of businessmen are actually thinking of closing their transactions for an unlimited period. But, if the situation is bad now, it is apprehended that it will become infinitely worse in the near future.

The Association, in this connection, invites the earnest attention of His Excellency the Viceroy to the statement of Mr H.S. Suhrawardy in which he threatened Bengal with dire consequences in case the partition of Bengal be decided upon. The Association urges His Excellency and the Interim Government to take all precautionary measures against a fresh outbreak of violence which may prove disastrous to the country. The Association is convinced that peace and tranquility cannot be maintained in Bengal unless the present Muslim League Ministry is removed and two Regional Ministries are formed for the two parts of Bengal. But, if for any administrative or other reasons, there be the likelihood of any delay in forming two ministries, the Association urges that Section 93 of the Government of India Act be applied before the announcement of the British Government's decision in order to tide over the critical period.

57. Partition Disastrous

Extract from a Letter from Sarat Bose to Vallabhbhai Patel, 27 May 1947
SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 45–6.

Calcutta

My dear Sardar,

...Isolation from all-India politics has not been of my seeking. Health and other circumstances have been conspiring against me since December last. During intervals, when I had a little respite from illness, I did some political work and also devoted some of my time and energy to curbing to some extent communal frenzy. Today the position is that communal frenzy is not the monopoly of the Muslim Leaguers; it has also overtaken large sections of Hindus, both Congressites and Mahasabhaitees. The Congress stand regarding partition has been taken advantage of by the sections mentioned above to inflame communal passions further. It has also brought back the Hindu Mahasabha to life and considerably strengthened its position.

I have given the public from time to time a very clear indication of my views. I consider it most unfortunate that the Congress Working Committee conceded Pakistan and supported partition. It is true that I have not been able to address public meetings yet for reasons of health; but having been in close touch with public opinion both in West and East Bengal, I can say that it is not a fact that Bengali Hindus unanimously demand partition. As far as East Bengal is concerned, there is not the slightest doubt that the overwhelming majority of Hindus there are opposed to partition. As regards West Bengal, the agitation for partition has gained ground because the Congress came to the aid of the Hindu Mahasabha and also because communal passions have been roused among the Hindus on account of the happenings since August last. The demand for partition is more or less confined to the middle classes. When the full implications of partition are realized and when people here find that all that they will get for Western Bengal province will be roughly one-third of the area of Bengal and only about half of the total Hindu population in Bengal, the agitation for partition will surely lose support. I entirely agree with you that we should take a united stand; but I shall say at the same time that the united stand should be for a united Bengal and a united India. Future generations will, I am afraid, condemn us for conceding division of India and supporting partition of Bengal and the Punjab.

I have been feeling somewhat better during the last fortnight and I do intend to take a greater part in all-India politics and, at the same time, to explain to the public of Bengal that partition would be disastrous to them.

I may come to Delhi within the next few days, but my coming or not coming will depend on the situation in Calcutta.

I trust you are keeping well. With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,
S.C. Bose

58. Governor's Assessment of the Political Situation in Bengal

Extract from a Letter from J.F. Burrows to Louis Mountbatten, 28 May 1947
Mountbatten Papers, File No. 18, NMML.

SECRET

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
CALCUTTA,

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

....All our information—and there is plenty of it—goes to show that if as result of the discussions beginning on the 2nd June it appears that partition is being forced on Bengal or that the Hindus can have partition for the asking, the Muslims will refuse to take it lying down and will adopt every form of resistance, in the course of which much blood will be shed and much property devastated, especially in Calcutta, the loss of any interest in which will be the greatest blow, financially and in prestige, to the Muslims of Eastern India. In the Province generally there is a feeling of pessimism and almost of resignation to the prospect of renewed communal strife on an unprecedented scale and in some parts the wildest ideas are current regarding the preparedness of the rival community to launch a planned campaign of violence the moment the signal is given. Calcutta is particularly 'jittery'....

....But what I really have in mind in acquainting you with this aspect of the position down here is to give you material (which I believe Suhrawardy and Kiran Shankar Roy will confirm and reinforce) for impressing on the All-India leaders of both sides the danger of the position in Bengal, the danger of widespread communal strife, followed almost immediately, as it inevitably would be in present circumstances, by a complete breakdown of our feeding arrangements for Calcutta and the deficit pockets of the Province (largely in East Bengal). A serious outbreak of communal strife at this moment might well cost us more lives by famine in the next few months than the rioting itself. If, therefore, and this is the point I am leading up to, division of India becomes inevitable and with it the opportunity to the Hindus to partition Bengal, it is in my opinion of supreme importance that if that is by any means an agreed decision or even a decision acquiesced in by the All-India leaders, these (and from my point of view especially Jinnah) should, if it is humanly possible, be got to the microphone at the earliest possible moment to say that all should acquiesce in the decisions taken at Delhi and to appeal in the strongest possible terms for their peaceful implementation. Though the response in Calcutta, so far, to the Gandhi-Jinnah appeal to abjure violent means has not been conspicuously favourable in practice, I believe that a strong indication by Jinnah (if he can be got to give it) that the decision is accepted by him as the best that can be got and as worthy of acceptance

and working out, for what it is worth, in peace and amity, would have a most steady effect on Muslims down here and, incidentally, on Hindu apprehensions.

Yours sincerely,
Burrows

59. Move for Partitioning Bengal Being Sabotaged by Some Local Congressmen

Letter from Surendra Nath Sen to Vallabhbhai Patel, 28 May 1947
SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 50–1.

39/2/G Manoharpukur Road
PO Rashbehari Avenue
Calcutta

Dear Sir,

May I take the liberty of encroaching on your valuable time for a few minutes? The matter is very urgent and requires prompt action by the Congress High Command, otherwise the move for partition of Bengal will be sabotaged, not by the Muslim Leaguers, nor by the European merchants, but by the local Congress leaders.

Many retired officers of the locality, including my humble self, suggested, as early as May 1946, through the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, separation of Western Bengal from Eastern Bengal, and incorporation of the former in the Union of India. We had to contend against strong public opposition until the great Calcutta killing, the Noakhali incidents, and the continuous misrule by the League Government convinced the public about the necessity of partition. The movement gathered momentum, until everyone accepted that it was almost a settled fact. I now find that some of the persons who had been ardent advocates of partition, are now advocating a 'sovereign Bengal.' I have reasons to believe that they have been influenced by some of the Congress leaders. It is rumoured that a huge sum of money has been placed at the disposal of those leaders for scuttling partition. Emissaries are being sent to Eastern Bengal to create disunity amongst caste and depressed class Hindus, and between Eastern Bengal and Western Bengal Hindus, through the agency of Peace and Prosperity League and the Communist Party. Up till now the saboteurs had not the courage to face any public meeting. But individual agents have been approaching old men and telling them that unless they agree to a free and independent Bengal, all the Hindus will be killed by the Muslims. To the middle aged persons those agents have been telling that Union Government is not likely to look much to the interest of Bengal. To the young men they are telling that if Western Bengal remains within the Union, Bengal will be exploited by non-Bengalis, especially the Marwaris. It is being preached in Eastern Bengal that after partition the men of Eastern Bengal will be deprived of all advantages of educational and other institutions of Calcutta. More and more Congress leaders are reported to be drawn into the conspiracy. The general feeling of the public is very much against those leaders who either through misconception or through motives of personal gain are going to sell the nationalists of Bengal to the Muslim Leaguers. If matters are permitted to drift further, those 'babus' may feel strong enough to declare a revolt against the High Command. But, if enquiries are held now, and a firm attitude [is] shown by

the High Command they may recant their past actions and may pledge loyalty to the High Command. There is not much time to lose if Bengal is to be saved from the mischievous actions of their so-called leaders.

With best regards,

I am,
Yours truly,
Surendranath Sen
(Retired Distt Judge)

PS.

One Bengal MLA who is now in England is reported to be helping the saboteurs.

60. Sovereign Bengal Would Mean Perpetual Communal Strife

Letter from Secretary, Bengal Provincial Depressed Classes League, to Louis Mountbatten, 30 May 1947

G.G. (Reforms), File No. 41/3/47-R, Part V, NAI.

To

His Excellency
The Governor-General of India,
NEW DELHI.

Your Excellency:

As per resolution of the Bengal Provincial Depressed Classes Conference under the auspices of the Bengal Provincial Depressed Class League, under the Presidency of Mr Radha Nath Das, MLA (Bengal), Member Constituent Assembly, held on 27th May, 1947 at the University Institute Hall, the following resolutions are being sent to your Excellency for your kind perusal and consideration:

1. Whereas the Muslim League is determined to separate Bengal from the Indian Union with a view to include the province in the Free Pakistan State and the British Government, according to the statement of February 20, instead of transferring power to the Indian Union might transfer power to the present Provincial Government and whereas the Muslim League wants to force the nationalist Bengalees to live like foreigners in their homeland of Bengal, this Conference proposes that a separate province be created with Burdwan and Presidency Divisions, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling districts, Calcutta and other parts which are willing to remain within the Indian Union.
2. Being misled by the political hoax of the Muslim League, some are trying to create a Sovereign Bengal State separate from the Indian Union. This Conference while condemning this move is of the opinion that creation of a Sovereign Bengal State will be dangerous for all nationalist Bengalees and will establish communalism permanently. This proposal is, therefore, unacceptable to this Conference.

3. This Conference demands that pending creation of a new Province in Bengal two regional Ministries for the administration of the affairs of the two parts of Bengal under one Governor, be formed for the interim period.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient servant
Ramananda Das,
Chairman,
Reception Committee

61. Muslim League Demands Inclusion of Calcutta in East Pakistan

Extract from a Memorandum from Calcutta District Muslim League and Others to M.A. Jinnah, 31 May 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 947–60.

8 ZAKARIA STREET, CALCUTTA

MEMORANDUM OF THE CALCUTTA DISTRICT MUSLIM LEAGUE, THE INDIAN NATIONAL MARITIME UNION AND THE ASANSOL SUBDIVISION MUSLIM LEAGUE

Our dear Quaid-i- Azam,

Permit us to lay before you the following:

That the Calcutta District Muslim League and the Indian National Maritime Union, Calcutta, in their meeting dated the 29th May, 1947, unanimously decided to represent the views and sentiments of the Muslims of Greater Calcutta on the future of Bengal and the proposed partition of Bengal, to Quaid-i-Azam and the League High Command, through a memorandum and a deputation to the Quaid-i-Azam. This deputation and memorandum is accordingly seeking to represent to you Calcutta Muslims' views and feelings.

Calcutta the Spearhead and Pivot of East Pakistan

The Muslims of Calcutta have been the spearhead of the entire League movement and the pivotal and focal point of the whole Pakistan struggle in Bengal. Calcutta was the first League on mass basis and the Calcutta League was the first to organize a Pakistan Conference in Calcutta Town Hall. The tremendous struggle and sacrifices of the Muslims of Calcutta for the cause of Pakistan soon after the Bombay Resolution of the Council of the All India Muslim League, rejecting the Cabinet Mission Plan and the blood-bath of Muslim Calcutta during and after the disturbances on 16th August, 1946, opened a new chapter in the history of the Pakistan struggle.

Battle of Calcutta is the Battle of Bengal

The Muslims of Calcutta have been fighting the Battle of Calcutta for the cause of Pakistan with the firm conviction that the party which will win the Battle of Calcutta will win the Battle of Bengal and the people who will control Calcutta will most certainly control Bengal....

Sinister moves of sabotage, treachery and betrayal

Quaid-i-Azam,

Your statement declaring your firm resolve to fight every inch for the integrity of Bengal and the Punjab has reassured us. But as we see very sinister underground moves to sabotage Pakistan in East India Zone, we believe it our duty to freely and frankly lay before you not only our feelings and views but also our dangers. The moment is critical and decisive in the history of Muslim India and it demands brutal frankness.

We belong to no party but the party of the League and we aspire for nothing personal or selfish but the integrity, sovereignty and greatness of Pakistan.

Treachery of selfishness

The Dangers are:

(A) First and foremost is the fact that we do not so much fear the Hindus. We do not even fear the British. But we most certainly fear treachery, betrayal, sabotage, defeatism and surrender to enemy's machinations in our own ranks in Bengal. To be free and frank, we apprehend that a certain section of leaders of East Bengal have not only failed in mobilizing forces to counter and resist the Hindu move for partition of Bengal and the Hindu occupation of Calcutta, rather they are really supporting the Hindu move covertly and indirectly. They are happy to see this partition. Bengal League leaders are openly divided into two groups (1) the Divisionists and (2) the Unionists—those who want the division of Bengal and those who want the unity of Bengal. For instance:

Divisionists

Mr Abdul Ghufuran, Minister Civil Supplies, was saying openly that the loss of Calcutta will be a good riddance as it was a white elephant which produced no food but consumed huge amount of foodgrains and that East Bengal will be happy without Calcutta.

Mr Shamsuddin, Labour Minister, seems of the same view.

Mr Hamidul Haque Chaudhry, MLC, who in Bengal League Working Committee always supported Greater Bengal schemes and even advocated joint electorate to secure greater Bengal, became a turncoat Divisionist overnight and is an advocate of East Bengal State. It is said that he is hoping to secure a sure seat in the new East Bengal Ministry, which he hopes will be soon formed after 2nd June, 1947, under Mr Noorul Amin.

Mr Noorul Amin, the Speaker of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, who was very anxious to secure a seat in the Bengal Ministry and is disgruntled for being disappointed in his campaign for reshuffling Bengal Cabinet, is aspiring to be the Premier of East Bengal. He fears that he will not be able to become Premier if Bengal is not partitioned.

The Retreatists and Defeatist

(A) *The Azad Group* of the East Pakistan Renaissance Society has been an advocate of partition of Bengal since 1945. They published a pamphlet on this subject with a map demarcating the boundary lines of East and West Bengal. Maulana Akram Khan belongs to this group which wants to retain Calcutta for Pakistan but regards the Hooghly River as natural boundary of East Pakistan. It is ready to sacrifice Burdwan Division.

The Unionists

(C) *Mr H.S. Suhrawardy*, the Bengal Premier, honestly feels that partition of Bengal will be a calamity which East Pakistan State will not be able to survive at all. He is obsessed with the idea that we must avoid partition of Bengal at any cost. He may be wrong in his methods and diplomacy but there is no doubt that he is feeling honestly and deeply for the unity of Bengal. *Khwaja Nazimuddin* seems to be not fully posted on facts. He sometimes supports *Divisionists* and sometime says that division will do harm to Bengal Muslims.

The Calcutta Muslims and Seamen

(D) The Muslims of Calcutta, including the Seamen, are for Pakistan—full-fledged and in its entirety. They are firmly resolved to fight for the whole of Bengal....

Our Submission

Quaid-i-Azam,

The Muslim masses of Bengal are sound and ready to fight for Pakistan. The Muslims of Calcutta assure you that they will not yield an inch to the enemy.

Our submissions in brief are that:

1. Never agree to sacrifice Calcutta or West Bengal.
2. For heaven's sake do not be misled by the false propaganda of the group of self-seekers, disgruntled defeatists and divisionists who by covertly advocating East Bengal State are really supporting Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and sabotaging your stand for integrity of Bengal.
3. Kindly pay more attention to the problems of Muslims of Greater Calcutta and the problems of the better organization of the splendid Bengal seamen.
4. Do something to organize and win over the tribals of Assam, West and North Bengal and Chhotanagpur and the depressed classes of Bengal and Assam.
5. As Quaid-i-Azam, order dissolution of all group of Divisionists in Bengal League fold. We are confident that this mischief of Divisionism and Divisionists Party in Bengal League fold can be nipped in the bud by your mere order. No leader in Bengal has the power to go against your declared order, policy or principle. But please let Bengal know that you regard Divisionism in Muslim League as a treachery and betrayal of the League's fundamental creed and ideal.

*Bengal Seamen and Muslim Calcutta's impregnable position in Sea Front and
River Front and Dock and Port Front*

In conclusion we beg to reassure you that Muslims of Calcutta hold the strongest and most impregnable position and are capable of fighting and defeating the enemy in Calcutta provided they get support and guidance from League High Command.

Facts of Make-up of Calcutta

We beg to lay before you the following facts regarding the port city of Calcutta.

The Jute Front of Muslim Bengal

(1) The first and foremost factor in the making and make-up of Calcutta comes jute. Calcutta is the 'City of Jute.' It is the by-product of the jute of Bengal. Calcutta is therefore rightly called

the port of jute and jute is the product of mainly the Muslims of East Bengal. This forms the Jute Front of Muslim Bengal.

The Sea Front of Muslim Bengal

(2) The second factor in the making and make-up of Calcutta comes the Seamen of Bengal, known all over the world as *Lascars*. They are all Muslims. This forms the Sea Front of Muslim Bengal.

The River Front of Muslim Bengal

(3) The third factor in the making and make-up of Calcutta comes the inland shipping which connects Assam with Bengal and India via Calcutta. The inland shipping companies of Calcutta are mostly British but they are manned wholly and solely by Muslims from Captain to *Sarang*. They control the entire trade and commerce of Bengal and Assam. This forms the River Front of Muslim Bengal.

The Tea Front under Command of Bengal Mariners

(4) Although tea is grown in Assam and North Bengal, it is exported through inland shipping steamers which are 100 per cent manned and officered by Muslim navigators of Bengal. Moreover this commodity is exported mainly through the port of Calcutta which is chiefly manned by Muslims. This forms the Tea Front of Muslim Bengal.

The Port Front of Muslim Bengal

(5) The port of Calcutta employs 22,000 workers as dockers and port workers and others, who work on the shores and do not go to the sea or to the rivers. Out of this, 17,000 are Muslims and 5,000 are Hindus and others. This forms the Port Front of Muslim Bengal.

Port Areas are Pakistan Areas in Population

(7) As the port of Calcutta is entirely a product of the labour, toil and sacrifices of generations of Muslims Seamen, Rivermen and Dockers, consequently the areas of port of Calcutta are overwhelmingly populated by Muslims.

From Garden Reach Municipality of Matiaburj down to Chandpall Ghat and the Armenian Ghat—the entire area of the port—Muslims vastly predominated in the population.

Matiaburj

In Matiaburj Municipality the population in 1941 was:

Total population	1,25,000
Muslims	1,05,000
Hindus	20,000
Bihar Muslim Refugees	50,000 (Approx.)
Total Muslims	1,55,000
Total Hindus	20,000

Matiaburj is a separate Municipality.

Iqbalpur, Kidderpore, Watganj and Hastings—95 percent

Iqbalpur, Kidderpore, Watganj and Hastings, which are port areas covered ward Nos. 25 and 26 of the Calcutta Corporation. Even before the war they were predominantly Muslim

wards. During the war Muslim population vastly increased due to war demand of seamen and dockers. After the Great Calcutta Riots of August, 1946, the Hindu population decreased much. Muslims are over 95 per cent.

In short from Matiaburj to Mominpur, Iqbalpur, Kidderpore, Watganj, Hastings, Calcutta Maidan, New Market, Chandni, Riverside Ghat, Hastings Street, Calcutta High Court and Town Hall, there is one long contiguous belt of predominantly Muslim wards which cover the entire port area of Calcutta. This gives Muslims a unique strategic position in the Battle of Calcutta and the Battle of Bengal.

The moment the League decides and order goes, the entire Sea Front, River Front, Dock and Port Front, Jute Front and Tea Front can be mobilized for war of Pakistan and the entire port, sea and river services of Bengal can be paralysed.

Glorious War Record of our Seamen

Please also remind Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten of the glorious part played by Bengal seamen, portmen and rivermen. Here are some salient facts about their war record:

Merchant Navy—Sea-going Vessels

- (1) 1,72,000 took part in World War II, including engine crew, deck crew, and saloon crew.
- (2) 28,000 Bengal seamen fell and died fighting in the World War II (1939–45) in the seven seas, excluding war prisoners who numbered [several] thousands.
- (3) 52,000 seamen from Sylhet were permanently engaged in War barring others who were coming and going.
- (4) 32,000 seamen from Noakhali were engaged in the war.
- (5) 20,000 seamen from Chittagong were engaged in the war.
- (6) 10,000 seamen from Calcutta were engaged in the war.

Inland Shipping

Bengal Steamer Service Men: 36,000 mariners are permanently engaged and they are cent per cent Muslim. Present strength of seamen engaged is over 55,000.

Most difficult functions are performed by Muslim seamen who can immobilize the entire port any moment.

Muslim seamen do all the most difficult and dangerous work, for example.

Arakatis—100% Bengal Muslims

They pilot and lead in the ships from the Bay of Bengal to Calcutta port and also pilot and lead out the ships from the port to the sea. No captain can sail or move without them. They alone know the safe routes for the ships. Without them ships run aground and are lost in the Bay or the Hooghly River, which are very dangerous for shipping. There is not a single non-Muslim *Arakati*.

Kamalias—100% Muslims

They are experts in proper loading of cargo. If the cargo is not loaded in order and properly, ships are unbalanced and sunk. This is a very specialised difficult function. There is not a single non-Muslim *Kamalia*.

Dubals (Divers)–100% Muslims

They are the world's most wonderful divers who dive and remain in the bed of the river and sea for 45 minutes without any cover, helmet or respiratory apparatus for doing marine work. There is not a single non-Muslim *Dubal*.

Each *Dubal* saves Rs 10,000. If apparatus for diving is employed it cost Rs 10,000 a month.

Sookanis (Steermen)–100% Muslims

They steer ships. There is not a single non-Muslim *Sookani*.

Mastmen–100% Muslims

They are perched high up on the masts of ships and have to do their duty day and night in hazardous seas in rain and hailstorm and watch sea routes. They are all Muslims.

Men of Anchor-Boat–100% Muslims

They cast anchors of ships and fix them to *Bayas*.

Men of Heave-up Boat–100% Muslims

They raise anchors of ships.

Men of Transfer Department–100% Muslims

They transfer ship from one jetty to another which is a very difficult job.

Engine Crew–100% Muslims

They work in engines deep below the sea surface in oppressive heat. They have wonderful power of endurance.

Sir Archibald Hurd, British authority on Merchant Navy, says that their power of endurance is wonderful and they are first class seamen.

British Decorations and Honours for Bengal Seamen

The British Government recognized the War Services of Bengal seamen by conferring British decorations and titles, honours and rewards on Bengal Muslim seamen. Many of them have been decorated with titles of OBE, Khan Bahadur, Khan Sahib, George Cross and other certificates, *sanads* and rewards. All the recipients are Muslims. Some of them were presented to His Majesty the King Emperor.

How Calcutta Port and Inland and Sea Shipping can function for a day without these Muslims?

How can the port of Calcutta and the inland and coastal and sea shipping function for a day without these Muslims? Please point it out to Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten that everyone of these men is firmly determined to defend the port of Calcutta and prevent it from shipping [sic] out to the control of Hindus. They will fight and die rather than accept the domination of Hindus in Calcutta.

Our Quaid-i-Azam, we stand by you in your fight for the integrity of Bengal and the unity of Pakistan. We assure you that the River Front, the Sea Front, the Dock Front and the Port Front of Calcutta will be your first line of Defence and that the Watermen will alone be able to bring the other parties to knees.

But there is one proviso—the Seamen, the Rivermen, the Portmen, who are all League-minded, should be thoroughly organized under the League and trained for this job.

We attach a note on the different organizations of Seamen, Rivermen, Boatmen, Dockers and Portmen.

We remain,

Yours most sincerely and obediently,

RAGHIB AHSAN

Member, Working Committee,

Bengal Provincial Muslim League,

Member, All India Muslim League Council,

S.M. USMAN

Ex-Mayor of Calcutta,

Secretary, Calcutta Muslim League

S.A. HAMID

Vice-President

Calcutta Muslim League,

Member, All India Muslim League Council

SYED MUHIBUR REHMAN

President, Kidderpore Muslim League,

Founder, Indian National Maritime Union

ABDUL AZIZ

Secretary, Kidderpore Muslim League,

Secretary, Indian National Maritime Union

MOHAMMAD YASIN

Secretary, Asansol Subdivisional Muslim League,

President, Bihar Refugees Union of Bengal, Asansol,

Member, Council All India Muslim League

62. Calcutta Should Be a Free City—Jinnah

Letter from H.S. Suhrawardy to Eric Mieville, 31 May 1947

TOP, Vol. XI, p. 20.

SECRET

6 CANNING ROAD

Dear Sir Eric,

I have had an interview with Mr Jinnah. He asked me if I had seen HE and, may the Lord forgive me, I told him 'no' as I did not want him to think HE had seen me. (Please show this to HE). He told me that if HE were to see me tomorrow, I should impress upon him the necessity for ascertaining the wishes of the people on the question of partition by utilizing the electoral roll on the basis of 1941 census. *He says this is very important*, and he does not know what HE has brought back from London on this point. He says that getting the wishes of the present members of the Legislature would not be fair, as the opinion of the Scheduled Castes will not be expressed—and we must not let the Scheduled Castes down. He seemed to think that we could create sufficient atmosphere to maintain peace after the announcement. I hope the appeal of the leaders, accepting though not agreeing or even deliberating, will be simultaneous

with the announcement in the interests of peace. He insists that Calcutta should be a free city, otherwise it will always remain a bone of contention. I have made clear to him my view regarding the Commonwealth, and I have every hope—all in good time. For this reason I am even reconciling myself to partition (if it is inevitable) and if zone A does not come within the Commonwealth. If it does, then, of course, the Congress can have no objection if independent Bengal also comes into the Commonwealth: if it does not and Bengal is independent, I shall have to work hard to get it in. I wonder if I am clear.

Yours sincerely,
H.S. SUHRAWARDY

63. League's Preparations to Resist Partition by Violent Means

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Louis Mountbatten, 31 May 1947
SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 388–9.

New Delhi

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

I am enclosing a copy of an extract from the Daily Report of the Central Intelligence Officer, Bengal, dated 22 May 1947. It appears that the general impression that the League is preparing itself to resist the partition of Bengal and the Punjab, even by resort to violent means, has a great deal more basis than one would be inclined to credit.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel.

ENCLOSURE

Extract from daily report dated 22 May 1947 of the Central Intelligence Officer, Bengal.

The general opinion among Muslims, however, seems somewhat different. On 18 May 1947 I.A. Mohajer, Salar-e-Suba of the Bengal Muslim National Guards, while addressing a large number of Muslim National Guards at Krishnagar (Nadia) is reported to have said that the Muslims of Bengal would not allow an inch of land to be taken out of Pakistan-Bengal. He concluded that if 17 Muslims could conquer this province, several crores of them could certainly retain it. The Muslim League paper *Morning News* of 22-5-47 draws attention to Mohajer's speech.

According to a secret report dated 18-5-47 emanating from the Eastern Command Intelligence Centre, Maulana Akram Khan claims that Mr Jinnah agreed that 'partition would be resisted at all costs' and that Mr Jinnah had gone over the plans for the Muslims' struggle in Calcutta and Bengal and had approved of it. This agency further claims that another Muslim Leaguer had said that the League had been perfectly prepared for a violent struggle and that arms of every description had been kept ready and that the League leaders had been doing their best to keep the Muslims quiet until after 2 June 1947 when on a call coming from Mr Jinnah a big war would start. The League leaders also hoped that if a holy war came the Muslim troops in the Indian Army would answer it. Today's (22-5-47) papers publish a statement of Mr Jinnah that the League would fight the partition of the Punjab and Bengal.



64. Plan to Sabotage Bengal Partition Will Not Succeed

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Surendranath Sen, 1 June 1947
SPC, Vol. IV, p. 52.

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of 28 May 1947.

We are aware of the danger arising from the activities of some people who are now trying to sabotage the scheme of partition of Bengal. But I do not think that the game will succeed. People in Bengal have seen through the whole game, and it is not likely that except for a few selfish individuals anybody will be taken in by the propaganda that is being carried on in the pompous name of a sovereign Bengal. The League people are now glibly talking of one race, one culture and one language; till yesterday they were swearing by their being a different nation, having a different language and a different culture. Nobody will fall into this trap in Bengal. Anyway, I do not think there is any cause for apprehension.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

65. 'Nationalist Bengal Must Join Centre or Perish'

Extract from a Report from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 2 June 1947.

'Let not the outer world carelessly imagine that we are crying for a Hindu Bengal to offset a Muslim Bengal. No, we are anxious to be united with the rest of India under a liberal modern Central Government in which sectarian differences will have no influence on politics and the modern progressive spirit—as found in Europe and America—will govern the action of the State. If any province of India is so misguided as to refuse to join our centre, we claim the right to cut ourselves off from it for our own good and also for the ultimate good of these dissenting members.'

Thus observed Sir Jadunath Sarkar, the noted historian and educationist presiding over a largely-attended meeting at Singhee Park, Ballygunj on Sunday forenoon.

The meeting which was organized under the joint auspices of Congress, Hindu Mahasabha, New Bengal Association and All-India Depressed Classes Association reiterated the demand for creation of a new Bengal with Calcutta as the capital, which would remain an integral part of the Indian Union. The proposals for Sovereign Bengal or Free State of Bengal and the reported Bose-Suhrawardy agreement were bitterly condemned by the meeting in a resolution. Speakers including S. N. C. Chatterjee, Meher Chand Dhiman and others addressed the gathering.

Pleading that an Indian Union would be unconquerable Sir Jadunath in an impassioned appeal said: 'Let all who love their native land gather under the banner of a strong modern and beneficent Central Government of India irrespective of colour or creed and help to defend, feed, educate and enrich our masses. Let Bengal avoiding all selfish spirit of isolation and loyally serving the Central Government of Hindusthan make itself an example and model to the rest of India. This great land, this holy Bharatbarsha will advance with the Muslim League if the League is wise enough to join us, but in spite of the League if it continues to be led by selfish and blind Fuehrers. Our enemies can make our advance painful and our path blood-stained, but nothing in the world, not even Carlton Club and Clivenden House standing behind our enemies, stop us now.'

Sir Jadunath Sarkar said: We meet when the future destiny of Bengal is being decided. Let us make known to the world outside what the problem of our province really is and how we feel on it. The question is not that a Hindu area should be created in west Bengal because there is a predominantly Muslim area in east Bengal. The question is of deeper significance than a scramble for patronage and power; it vitally affects the future of our race, and unborn generations in Bengal, both Hindus and Muslims, will suffer from a false decision now. Reduced to its simplest form the choice before us is this,—should Bengal form a civilised progressive province of a modern secular State or should it be a part of a medieval dogmatic theocracy in which the entire civil life of the people is subordinated to the exclusive religious code of the dominant sect. Only four days ago Mr Ghazanfar Ali Khan (the League leader) said at Patna that ‘the constitution of the Pakistani State was already embodied in the religious code of Islam’, so, there is no doubt left in any rational mind as to how Pakistan will govern its members. The Quranic law will strictly regulate the policy and measures of this Government, and the modern political wisdom of Europe and America will have no place in it. Which of these two sides should Bengal choose?

UNION WITH REST OF INDIA

Let not the outer world carelessly imagine that we are crying for a Hindu Bengal to offset a Muslim Bengal. No: We are anxious to be united with the rest of India under a liberal modern Central Government in which sectarian differences will have no influence on politics and the modern progressive spirit—as found in Europe and America, will govern the action of the State. In such a State all men will have equal status, with no weightage no reservation, no special privileges; the public service will be thrown open to talent without consideration of caste or creed or family connection. Efficiency of administration cannot be secured and the present rampant corruption in the Government departments cannot be put down unless the best men are selected for posts. Only on such a basis can a true democracy be built and we are all crying for democratic government.

Every province that joins such a progressive federal centre, will make that centre stronger and better able to defend itself and its component parts and give them the best value for the revenue they pay. Therefore our Central Government must be given real power and varied authority; a weak centre, with its hands tied down to two or three general matters, will be impotent for good; it cannot possibly defend such a continent as India; it cannot raise the necessary revenue and maintain order and the transport services in the various provinces without which no State can function in the modern world. Therefore let the world understand that we want first, union with the Central Government of India, (2) secondly, to make our provincial as well as the Central Government secular, progressive and modern in spirit and (3) thirdly, to establish absolute democratic equality among our citizens, in the choice of legislators and public servants.

ISLAMIC THEOCRACY AND MODERN SPIRIT

If any sect objects to such a programme it will be the first to suffer for its folly. Let us take a glaring example. A century ago, when English education was introduced into this country, the Hindus took gladly to it, while the selfish leaders of the Muslim community told their blind followers that if they studied European literature and science, Islam would be in danger. The result is that the Muslims have been thrown by these leaders a century behind the Hindus, intellectually, economically and in political education as distinct from the herd instinct. Look at

the status of the Muslim University of Aligarh in the learned opinion of Europe and contrast it with the reputation enjoyed by the Madras University. The Fellowship of the Royal Society of Great Britain is the highest honour in the scientific world, and there have been nearly a dozen Hindus and Parsis elected to this honour. What communal quota have the Indian Muslims got here. The only two Asiatics to win the Nobel Prize have been Hindus; no 'parity at the centre' for the Muslims here. Is this a state of things of which any patriotic Muhammadan can feel proud? Should he not wish to remedy it, by joining in the full stream of modern knowledge and modern progress, ignoring the theocratic ideal of primitive Islam, which Mr Ghaznafar Ali still adores.

Look forward, look at the great moving world and not to your small narrow dim religious past, nor to your small narrow corner, by cutting yourself off from the progressive parts of India and the outer world. The whole teaching of modern history has been synthesis or integration of parts, not fragmentation or isolation of limb. The United States of America started with a loose Federation of semi-independent States, but the whole history of that country during 170 years has been a movement towards the greater union of the parts, towards strengthening the hands of the Central Government and extending its functions and control over the various provinces of that Union. The result is that North America is not today a second Balkan cockpit, but the strongest unified Power in the world, a Power, whom even the great Colossus of Russia is afraid to challenge. Should India be now called upon to act contrary to this unmistakable teaching of history? Should the disintegration of our country on the downfall of the Mughal Empire be repeated after the withdrawal of English suzerainty? What patriot can desire it? What sensible man can welcome such a prospect?...

It is a mistake to suppose that Islamic Society is uniform and solidly united. The great rift between the Shias and Sunnis is known to all. But students of Islamic history will tell you that even in the early days of the Caliphs after the Prophet's death, there sprang up seventy two different sects in Islam, and some of them (like the Aga Khan's first ancestor) resorted to secret murder of their Muslim opponents. If once fanaticism is let loose, the prospect is not alluring.

DEFENCE OF INDIAN UNION

What about the military defence of India? Can Hindustan, when cut off from West Punjab, the NWFP and Sind, maintain itself by its own armed people? Take it from me that Hindustan can hold its own, though the positive hostility or covert intrigue of the western Pakistan belt may add to the difficulty and costliness of our national defence. In the British Indian army today 23.7 per cent of the officers and 33.8 per cent of the other ranks are Muslims as against 64.1 per cent of officers and 63.2 per cent of the men being Hindus and Sikhs. Besides, there are 37 Gurkha units, not counted in the above. Exclude all the Muslims from this calculation and even then what remains of non-Muslims will be sufficient to defend India. But why should we lose all the Muslim officers and men? Such of them as have their homes in Hindustan will usually be glad to continue in their honourable career in the loyal service of their homeland, without hankering to banish themselves to the hills and deserts of Pakistan....

Chapter 22. Exercising Options: Referendum in North-West Frontier Province and Sylhet

A. NWFP

1. 'Pathans Have No Grouse against Any Party in India—Faqr of Ipi Issues Poster'

Extracts from a Report from *The Tribune*, 7 April 1947.

PESHAWAR, April 5—Thousands of posters under the signature of Sultanul Mijahidi, known for all practical purposes to be Faqr of Ipi, have recently been distributed in tribal areas of NWFP....

The declaration says: 'Of late we have come to know that Congress Party of India has gained strength to such an extent that it can make the British quit the sacred soil of Hindustan and Waziristan, and, therefore, it wants to negotiate terms of mutual interest and welfare of both settled and tribal areas. If that is so we are ready to come to terms with the accredited Ambassador for India because we feel that without such an arrangement no agreement could be really binding. We have been deceived by the cunning British diplomacy in season and out of season and now we cannot afford to fall a prey to any more hypocrisy and cheating.'...

'We have been constantly crusading against the British Government for maintenance of our religious rights and political as well as economic freedom and whosoever favours our programme on the above lines can befriend us with pleasure. On the other hand we have nothing to do with our ideals. We have no grouse against the ideals and policy of any party in India and hence neither we have joined nor do we intend to join any party. Nevertheless we harbour no ill-will towards any Indian. The real enemy of us all is the British who is responsible for creating suspicion and distrust between the two great people of Hindustan and Waziristan and as such it is our bounden duty to refuse him every assistance in his underhand games.'—United Press.



2. Impending Referendum in NWFP

Letter from Firoz Khan Noon to M.A. Jinnah, 30 April 1947
Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 633–4.

PESHAWAR,

Dear Mr Jinnah,

I have spent a week here and addressed 20 meetings and covered about 250 miles outside Peshawar, [including the] districts [of] Kohat, Mardan and Peshawar. There is a great swing over to the League.

You must press for Section 93. There will be a referendum on the Pakistan issue and on such occasions one of the contesting parties cannot be allowed to remain in charge of the elections. There is, of course, the danger that Olaf Caroe may, like Jenkins, become a Ranjit Singh in the NWFP and procrastinate and not hold elections, but try and get the Viceroy committed to holding elections.

If there are new elections in the Punjab, some Sikhs in the Western Punjab may split from Tara Singh on the United Punjab issue.

Yours sincerely,

FIROZ NOON

PS. If Caroe behaves like Jenkins and continues to rule under Section 93, then a movement would develop here against the British which will finish the Congress for ever and put the League at the top.

3. Caroe's Views on Referendum

Extracts from a Telegram from Louis Mountbatten to H.L. Ismay, 5 May 1947
IOR, R/3/1/151, Acc. No. 3819, NAI.

MOST IMMEDIATE

NEW DELHI

No. 987-S. I. Further to my 968-S of 3rd May and 982-S of 4th May. Views of Governor of North-West Frontier Province on proposal for referendum in that Province have now been received. In general he greatly favours plan. He mentions following difficulties, which, however, we both feel can be overcome:

- (a) machinery. It would be hard to find enough outside officials without calling on NWFP resources;
- (b) modification of law. It might be necessary to promulgate special ordinance.
- (c) Result in favour of Pakistan would have to be followed by election which owing to weightage or other reasons might, though improbably, return Congress to power. It would have to be made clear that on the main issue result of referendum was final.

2. In view of this I am strongly in favour of a referendum in the N.W.F.P., organized by me and run by specially selected officers. I have now sent for Nehru to discuss this at 15.30 today, Monday; I will telegraph again after I have seen him....



4. Consensus amongst Leaders Necessary for Referendum

Extract from a Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Louis Mountbatten, 10 May 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 128–9.

Simla

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Thank you for your two letters dated 10th May which I have just received. As suggested by you, I am trying to get a meeting of the Congress Working Committee convened for the 16th or 17th May in Delhi. I have telephoned to Sardar Patel to this effect and I hope he will make the necessary arrangements. Gandhiji and Dr Khan Sahib are also being invited.

2. I am myself anxious that there should be no avoidable delay in coming to decisions and giving effect to them....Apart from the original proposals which were put forward somewhat vaguely, there are now other suggestions in addition which introduce a great deal of complexity to the problems we have to face. Each step acts and reacts on the other and we have to consider carefully what the final outcome might be. I confess that I do not see much light and many things trouble me....

3....I find from one of your letters that you have asked Caroe to tell Dr Khan Sahib that I am in general agreement with the procedure suggested, namely a referendum. Now this is the one thing on which there is very strong opinion among my colleagues not only of the Working Committee but also of Dr Khan Sahib's Government, and I was specifically asked to inform you of their strong opposition to this. I myself greatly fear that any referendum, before the situation is much clearer and other final decisions have been taken, may lead to grave consequences. In any event such a referendum can only be held with the full concurrence of the Frontier Government. As I have told you, I am in agreement with the idea that the will of the people of the Frontier Province should be consulted before final decisions in regard to the position of the province are taken. But it is very important when this is done and in what context.

4. You will have seen Gandhiji's reactions and an interview that Sardar Patel gave yesterday. I have no doubt that the former should be given due weight, though in regard to some details it does not fit in with the general Congress viewpoint. Sardar Patel's interview is a clear expression of the Congress viewpoint.

5. What I fear is that if the new proposals are not generally agreed to and are a marked departure from the position which flowed from the Cabinet Mission's Scheme, they will result in producing a very great deal of uncertainty in the public mind. This will be unfortunate from every point of view. The Cabinet Mission's Scheme at least produced some certainty. If it cannot be applied in toto, it might be varied to suit the exigencies of the situation. Another landmark which brought some certainty was the declaration of February 20th. If anything happens to shake that feeling of certainty, there will be complete instability in the country. The new proposals, therefore, should fit in as far as possible, subject to necessary variations, with the position as it has been thus far.

Yours sincerely,
 Jawaharlal Nehru



5. No Need for Section 93 or Fresh Elections in NWFP

Telegram from Louis Mountbatten to Jawaharlal Nehru, 10 May 1947
IOR, R/3/1/151, Acc. No. 3819, NAI.

No. 1446(3)

I have read through the amendments which Dr Khan Sahib proposes to the minutes of the meeting which I held with him and his Ministers last week at Peshawar which you handed to me earlier in the week at Delhi. I have also received a copy of these amendments from Caroe.

2. As you know, I am no longer of the view that it is necessary to go into Section 93 in the Frontier Province, or that fresh elections should be held now. I am, therefore, asking Caroe to explain to Dr Khan Sahib that there is now no question of this procedure being adopted; and that instead I had recommended to HMG that there should be, at a suitable date when the partition of India was clearer, a referendum on the electoral roll, which will be conducted by an organization under my control.

3. I will tell Caroe to tell Dr Khan Sahib that you are in general agreement with this procedure. I am sure that it is the fairest and best way of achieving the object, namely of making sure that decision whether the NWFP goes to Pakistan or Hindustan is in accordance with the will of the people.

4. In the circumstances I feel that no detailed discussion of Dr Khan Sahib's amendments is now required.

MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA

6. Pathans Demand Independent Sovereign State

Extract from a Report from *The Hindustan Times*, 14 May 1947.

PESHAWAR, May, 13.—Further clarification of an independent sovereign State of Pathans was made by Qazi Attaullah Khan, Minister for Revenue, N.W.F.P., at the press conference today.

He said: 'First of all we want to have an independent sovereign State of Pathans and then we will visualize a joint jirga conference of the whole Pathan nation which will ultimately negotiate on equal footing either with Hindustan or Pakistan whichever offers us better terms. But we shall in no case tolerate any domination by Hindustan or Pakistan. Whatever form of constitution the British Government offers we shall negotiate only on equal footings and not as subordinate of the Government of India. We will never agree to sacrifice Pathans' interest at the altar of Pakistan. When there is no political or moral obligation why should we sell ourselves to Hindustan or Pakistan?'

Replying to a question, Qazi Attaullah said: 'We are even prepared to negotiate with the so-called Muslim League in the N.W.F.P. and also to sit in group with the Punjab according to the Cabinet Mission's proposal provided no constitution is forced on us against the wishes of Pathans which reduces them to a subordinate position.'

In reply to another question, he said: 'For the present we have not made up our mind to join Hindustan or Pakistan and our mind is open for treaty with any party which offers us best terms.'...



7. Struggle for Pathan National Province under Coalition

Extract from a Letter from Olaf Caroe to John Colville, 22 May 1947

TOP, Vol. X, p. 944.

CONFIDENTIAL

GOVERNOR'S CAMP, PARACHINAR

No. GH-58

2. The interesting local development in the political field is that my Ministry and Abdul Ghaffar Khan have started propaganda on a theme which I advised them to take up some months ago: that of a Pathan national Province under a coalition if possible, and making its own alliances as may suit it. When I put it to them then they professed what amounted to fury at the mere suggestion. There is a good deal in the theme itself, and the appeal is a far more constructive one than that of Islam in danger. The switch-over has probably come too late, but to my mind it is a strength, and not a weakness, that Pathanistan cannot subsist financially or otherwise on its own legs. The weakness is that the Pathans have hitherto been too divided among themselves to set up a stable State, and where they have ruled they have ruled as conquerors of alien populations. They themselves had always been in a state of anarchy right through history until we came and put them in order. (Afghanistan is not really a Pathan State at all).

8. 'Congress Has Miserably Failed in Frontier: Idea of Pathanistan—A Stunt'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 31 May 1947.

NEW DELHI, Friday.—**'I am quite confident that if a referendum is held in the Frontier, an overwhelming majority of Pathans will vote in favour of Pakistan and all that the League stands for', said Mr Mohammad Aslam Mehmand, President of the Peshawar City Muslim League, in an interview to the Orient Press of India, here last night.**

He added: 'All sections of tribal people are in full sympathy with the League movement and with the demand for Pakistan.'

'The tribal people have no liking for the Congress and its supporters. News occasionally appears in papers, of tribal maliks meeting Dr Khan Sahib and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and assuring them of their loyalty and co-operation. This is false. In reality, they are not tribal maliks but Congress agents.'

Giving instance to show how the Congress had lost its popularity, he said that in Utmanzai, the home village of the Khan brothers, all Muslims, excepting their close relatives and domestic servants, had burnt their Red Shirt uniforms and joined the League. In Charsadda, the stronghold of the Red Shirt movement, the League was not able to launch a movement till May 21.

As police could not check the movement, the Khan brothers organized the 'Zalme Pakhtoon' but as the number of 'Ghazi Pakhtoon' was greater, the former could not be very effective.

Congress Admission

The formation of the 'Zalme Pakhtoon', Mr Aslam Mehmand said, was clear admission of the fact that the Congress had failed in the Frontier. The Khan brothers were trying all possible means to revive their popularity and that of the Congress. But the movement had not attracted more than a handful of persons and could not frighten the brave Leaguers.

The 'Ghazi Pakhtoon', he said, was organized only to counteract the violent and aggressive activities of the 'Zalme Pakhtoon'. Its duty was to provide aimed defence. It was not correct to refer to it as the League Army....

He ridiculed the idea of an independent Pathanistan and said that this new Congress stunt could not carry them far. This suggestion was intended to woo the Pathans but they had realized that the advocates of independent Pathanistan were not with the Muslim but with the Congress. If they were really serious in promoting the welfare of the Pathans, they should begin by cutting all connections with the Congress....

9. 'Do or Die'

M.K. Gandhi's Talk with Abdul Ghaffar Khan, 31 May 1947

CWMG, Vol. LXXXVIII, p. 43.

GHAFFAR KHAN: So, Mahatmaji, you will now regard us as Pakistanis?... A terrible situation faces the Frontier Province and Baluchistan. We do not know what to do.

GANDHIJI: Have you read what I have been saying during the past two or three days? One who has faith in non-violence should not yield to despair in this manner. You and your Khudai Khidmatgars are going to be tested now. You can say that you do not accept Pakistan and then submit to whatever is inflicted on you. We have, as you know, adopted the motto of 'do or die'. It does not befit one who professes such a motto to give way to despair. And whatever happens I am going to visit the Frontier Province, for I don't believe in these divisions of the country. I am not going to ask anybody's permission. If they kill me for my defiance, I will embrace death with a smiling face. That is, if Pakistan comes into existence, I intend to tour it, live there and see what they do to me. This girl will of course be with me, so that we two old men and this girl will tour together. Will that be all right?

GHAFFAR KHAN: I understand. I won't take any more of your time.

10. Jinnah's Views on Referendum in NWFP

Letter from Eric Mieville to Louis Mountbatten, c. May 1947

IOR, R/3/1/151, Acc. No. 3819, NAI.

Your Excellency.

I had an unsatisfactory talk with Mr Jinnah this morning. He flatly turned down the two drafts on the grounds that there was no mention that the referendum would be held under your agency and that there was also no mention of an election. I went over the grounds once more on the lines that you took last night but he was unshaken. He said that the people on the Frontier were not particularly intelligent and unless it were made clear that an election would follow the referendum they would not be satisfied. He therefore felt that it would be best for him to issue a statement on his own responsibility, but assured me that he would not do so until he heard further from you. He added that so much of the plan had now leaked in the Congress press and was known to so many people that it was being freely and openly discussed, that he felt you would raise no objection to what he proposed to say. The gist of his statement would be as follows:

'He had reason to believe that Your Excellency had recommended to HMG a referendum in the NWFP. This could only be done by the Viceroy through his own agency and he hoped that HMG would accept the recommendation. If, as a result of the referendum, the people voted in favour of Pakistan, in his judgment elections were inevitable and must be held and would give an opportunity to the people to choose their representatives. A new Ministry would be formed to carry out the verdict given by the people. In these circumstances, he most earnestly appealed to the members of the Muslim League to remain strictly peaceful and not allow the movement to take a communal turn, whatever the provocation might be from the other side. He would not advise them to call off the movement, but he again repeated that they should remain strictly peaceful, and as far as possible not give a case to the other side to use violence or force which he had already denounced in unequivocal terms. They must remember that the All-India Muslim League had only changed its policy as it was bound to pursue according to its constitution strictly constitutional methods, but it had never up to now decided to resort to Direct Action. The resolution made it clear that they would launch the movement as and when necessary. Even if they were forced to resort to such extreme measures it had never been contemplated that they would use violence or force. It was quite obvious that people without arms would be ill-advised if they were to resort to violence and force against the organized power of the Government.'

I then asked him whether under any conditions he would agree to accept the Cabinet Mission Plan. He replied 'Under no conditions whatsoever', and then trotted out the old slogan of accepting a portion of the Sind desert rather than the Plan. I warned him that in all probability the fact that the Cabinet Mission plan had been turned down would probably fall entirely on his shoulders, although I was not in a position to say under what conditions the Congress could accept it. He was unmoved.

I finally mentioned the PUNJAB and told him that I had seen Sikhs and Hindus from that Province who one and all had complained to me that in the 17 districts that were going to him all the rich, arable and fertile land would be his. He laughed and said that that was not his fault! This reinforced my belief that he is quite ready to accept the division of the Punjab in spite of his recent statement to the contrary in the Press.

E. C. MIEVILLE

11. 'Pathanistan Move Gains Momentum'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 1 June 1947.

ABBOTTABAD, (By air mail).—The movement for the establishment of a sovereign Pathan Socialist Republic has gained great momentum. This movement which was initiated originally by Nawabzada Allah Nawaz Khan, Speaker of the Frontier Assembly, has received the support, not only of Frontier Ministers and Congress leaders, but also of all the leading tribal chiefs and sardars. This has become more popular in the tribal areas. It is suggested that a plebiscite on this question should be held there, three or four months after the British quit. A suggestion from some influential quarter is that a provincial Socialist State of Frontier and the Tribal Areas should immediately be formed for the transition period under the Faqir of Ipi and an Interim Ministry be constituted forthwith, consisting of all those elements who pin their faith in the new Socialist Republic.

The Khudai Khidmatgar organization should form as a nucleus for the army of this State. This army should also be responsible for the protection of all tribal Passes.

A significant feature of the popularity of this movement is that some prominent League workers of Kohat District have also lent their support to this movement. They further suggest that the present Congress Ministry should give proof of their solicitude for the masses by a radical change of the agrarian laws and abolishing of landlordism....

12. 'Unity of Islam More Sacred Than Pathanistan: Ghaffar Khan's Propaganda Exposed'

Dawn, 2 June 1947.

PESHAWAR, Sunday.—'The move to create a separate sovereign State of Pathans—Pathanistan—is another move of Hindus to truncate Pakistan and another attempt on the part of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan to keep himself supreme in the Frontier Province,' said Mr Mohd Ashraf Khan, Secretary of the Peshawar City Muslim League, in a Press statement.

Mr Ashraf Khan said: 'Where the Pathan considers the unity of the Pathans necessary he considers the unity of Islam more essential and sacred. The unity of Pathans will be automatically achieved when all Muslims unite.'

Referring to the present visit to Delhi of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Muslim League leaders, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan and Khan Samin Jan Khan, at the same time Mr Mohd Ashraf Khan said: 'Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan wishes to meet Qaed-e-Azam Jinnah through these Muslim League leaders.

'The Congress has lost its hold on the Frontier and the Muslim League is the only representative body of Muslims.

'I am sure that unless Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan joins the Muslim League unconditionally the Qaed-e-Azam will never call a truce.'

Replying to the statement of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's Secretary, Mr Yunas Khan that Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was not going to see Qaed-e-Azam Jinnah, Mr Ashraf Khan said that this was not the first time that he had issued a baseless and irresponsible statement.—API.

B. SYLHET

1. Bengal's Future Must Be Decided before Referendum in Sylhet

Telegram from J.F. Burrows to Louis Mountbatten, 8 May 1947
Mountbatten Papers, Subject File No. 25, NMML.

IMMEDIATE

SECRET

112-S. Addressed Viceroy repeated Secretary of State and Governor, Assam. Secretary of State's telegram 5889 from Ismay. I have not seen VCP 42: latest paper I have seen is VCP 38.

2. I do not think possibility of inclusion of Sylhet would materially affect chances of retaining a united Bengal if parties were otherwise willing. I would suggest therefore (if this is not already provided for) that Sylhet should vote only after all voting in Bengal is finished. Sylhet would then have complete picture before taking its own side. As suggested below, Sylhet's option, if

in favour of joining united Bengal or East Bengal, should be subject to agreement from Bengal side. Subject to this I would agree that Sylhet should enjoy option of voting to join either united or separate East Bengal.

3. I would agree that if there is no insuperable objection to the possibility of Sylhet's being left to form separate administration, transfer of Sylhet from Assam to united or partitioned Bengal should be subject to agreement from Bengal side. I would add that I anticipate no difficulty from Bengal side in including Sylhet.

2. Protest against Inclusion of Sylhet in East Bengal

Letter from P.B. Biswas to Congress and Hindu Mahasabha Leaders, 27 May 1947
S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 130, Installment II to IV, NMML.

Sir,

I crave your indulgence for encroaching upon your valuable time but urgency leaves no alternative.

I am much perturbed over the suggestion in the Press that Sylhet would be annexed to Eastern Pakistan. The proposed partition of Bengal and the Punjab means curving out two new provinces out of the existing ones. The same principle does not apply in the case of Sylhet as it cannot constitute a province by itself when taken out of the Surma Valley Division and for the matter of that from Assam. If this is done either on (i) linguistic or (ii) religious basis, then it can be argued with equal force, if not more, on both counts that the whole of Surma Valley (Sylhet with 46/47 per cent Hindus and Cachar a predominantly Hindu district) with other Bengal districts now in Bihar should be ceded to the present province of Bengal, thus making it a Hindu majority, that is, a nationalist majority province, to thwart the reactionary element. If for any reason whatsoever it is not feasible at the moment, I don't see any reason why a district, when it cannot by itself be a province, should be cut off from one province and annexed to another.

Another point in favour of this argument is that not only Hindus, but also quite a good number of Muslims of Sylhet are not supporters of the Muslim League.

You are better gifted to espouse the cause of Sylhet and I am quite sure you will not fail us.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,
P.B. Biswas

May 27th, 1947.

58, Balaram Mazumdar St.,
Calcutta.

(Home address—

PO and Vill Narpati,
(Sylhet).

1. Hon'ble Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru,
2. Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel,
3. Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee.
4. Hon'ble Mr Gopinath Bardoloi

Chapter 23. Minority Groups* and Displaced Populations

1. Recovery of Abducted Women

Extract from Note of an Interview between Evan Jenkins and Firoz Khan Noon, 24 March 1947

Lionel Carter, (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 255–6.

Malik Firoz Khan Noon saw me at 3 p.m. today. He has just spent a few days in Rawalpindi. Like all the Muslim League leaders, he is very complacent and does not realize the effect of the massacre in the Rawalpindi Division on the opinion of all non-Muslims in the Punjab and of all British officers. As always, he was almost too reasonable and agreed with everything I said. The only specific points he made were as follows:

(1) He thought that the recovery of non-Muslim women abducted during the riots might be accelerated if an amnesty were given. In Bihar apparently the Premier made a public announcement that if women were returned within a week (or some stated period), it would be assumed that those returning them had been protecting them and had not committed any offence.

I replied that I was doubtful and would ascertain what the position was in Rawalpindi....

3. The Malik Sahib has very little importance politically. He is complacent and full of prejudice, and told me stories about alleged excesses by the troops, etc. I pointed out that I had heard different stories about the same incidents, and added that he must not be surprised if the Police and troops were tough on occasions. The Muslim rioters had not been gentle, and if they were roughly handled sometimes, it was not more than they deserved.

E.M.J.

2. Establishment of Relief Camps

Extract from a Note by Evan Jenkins on His Interview with Kartar Singh and Jagjit Singh Mann, 24 March 1947

Lionel Carter, (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 253–5.

Giani Kartar Singh and Sardar Jagjit Singh Mann saw me for over an hour this afternoon. The Giani did nearly all the talking.

* The term 'Minority Groups' has been used as indicative of all those groups which were in a demographic minority in parts or the whole of India.

2. He began by handing me the attached paper, which originally contained ten points, but was expanded by him to include fourteen. I deal with these points below seriatim.

(1) What the Giani really wants is that the Wah Camp should be reserved for Attock refugees, that Kala should be reserved for Jhelum refugees, and that a new Camp, preferably near Gujar Khan, should be established for Rawalpindi. He says that the large Gurdwaras in the Punjab and the Patiala, Kapurthala and Faridkot States can between them take from 7,000 to 8,000 persons. He would like a camp at Dhudial. I explained our policy and said that it would be impossible for us to have a lot of small camps. I was going to Rawalpindi tomorrow and would look into the position further.

(2) Sardar Jagjit Singh put the number of abducted women at about 400. The Giani said that there should be a general search not only for women, but for stolen property and arms, and exits from the Punjab should be guarded. I said that all this was in hand, but I would see tomorrow in Rawalpindi what progress had been made.

(3) The Giani said he appreciated that rehabilitation would be a long business. He thought that a large number of the Sikhs could be accommodated near various Gurdwaras and in various small towns. ...

(11) The SGPC/SA Dal would like to send a party of relief workers to Rawalpindi on 27th or 28th March. The party would include the Giani, Sardar Jagjit Singh and 8 or 10 others. They would travel by lorry and would like an escort from Lahore. They felt that they could do much to help in sorting out the refugees and moving those who are prepared to settle near the Gurdwaras, and other places in other parts of the Punjab. I said I would enquire about this at Rawalpindi and let the Giani know my views on my return. He asked for a letter to be sent care of the SGPC, Amritsar. IG might consider this, and we will discuss this at Rawalpindi....

3. Arrangements for Relief Work

Note by Evan Jenkins about His Interview with Swaran Singh and Kartar Singh,
26 March 1947

Lionel Carter, (Ed.), *Punjab Politics*, Vol. IV, pp. 257–8.

Sardar Swaran Singh and Giani Kartar Singh saw me this afternoon at 3.40 p.m. by appointment. Sardar Swaran Singh did most of the talking. The following are the points which concern Mr Henderson.

- (1) Refugees are very short of bedding. I said Mr Henderson was procuring blankets in large numbers. Sardar Swaran Singh said one blanket and one *durrie* (both obtainable from Disposals) would suffice for each person.
- (2) Sikh organizations are sending some made-up clothes, but considerable quantities of cloth will be needed, and the Sikhs would like this made available at Government expense. I said that we were going into the clothing problem later when the refugees had been sorted out.
- (3) The refugees would prefer to have no ration of rice and to have their whole ration in wheat. Sardar Swaran Singh said that Mr Sachdev was looking into this and that Mr Buch and Mr I.U. Khan would probably visit Rawalpindi shortly with authority to take a final decision. His argument against rice is that it requires plates, and other things, whereas wheat *chapattis* are easily cooked and consumed in camp conditions.

- (4) There are some Sikh relief workers at Kala—probably 100 in all. They will pay for their food, but would like rations issued to them. I said I would refer this to Mr Henderson. I thought that within a few days there would be no work for voluntary workers to do. Sardar Swaran Singh said that in that case the voluntary workers would be withdrawn.
- (5) The refugee problem will probably solve itself before long, since most of the refugees are well-to-do. After confidence has been restored and the investigations are well launched, many of them will be ready to go away. I made no comment on this.
- (6) There should be certain recognized rehabilitation centres such as Gujar Khan, Sukho, Daultala, where military or police guards should be maintained for some time. Many of the refugees are determined to settle down again in the area, but may wish to concentrate in places with a considerable non-Muslim population. I said that this was in line with what I understood to be the official opinion. DC Rawalpindi was not anxious to force people to go back to their villages, but thought that any who wished to do so should be encouraged. I said that the Army were being very co-operative about helping the civil authorities for some time longer.

2. I took the opportunity of mentioning Giani Kartar Singh's proposed mission to Rawalpindi. I said that the local officers had to consider not only the administrative problem of the refugees, but Muslim feeling. Constant visits by leaders did not help while the sorting out of refugees was beginning and investigations were being launched. From this point of view the position would be much clearer in another ten days or so. Also we must remember that punitive action against the offending Muslims was now in hand. The Muslims attributed the communal disturbances largely to statements by Master Tara Singh; some of them were resentful, others apprehensive, and others truculent. We were doing what we possibly could, and it would be fair to leave the local officers to sort matters out. Sardar Swaran Singh said that the Sikhs would accept my advice, and I hope they will do so. Giani Kartar Singh did not raise the question of an escort again, but was rather silent throughout the interview.

E.M.J.

4. 'More Valiant to Get Killed Than Kill'

M.K. Gandhi's Talk with Refugees from Rawalpindi, 4 April 1947
CWMG, Vol. LXXXVII, pp. 200–1.

Q. You tell people to discard arms, but in the Punjab the Muslims kill the Hindus at sight. You have no time even to go to the Punjab. Do you want us to be butchered like sheep?

GANDHIJI: If all the Punjabis were to die to the last man without killing, the Punjab would become immortal. It is more valiant to get killed than to kill. Of course my condition is that even if we are facing death we must not take up arms against them. But you take up arms and when you are defeated you come to me. Of what help can I be to you in these circumstances? If you cared to listen to me, I could restore calm in the Punjab even from here. One thousand lost their lives of course, but not like brave men. I would have liked the sixteen who escaped by hiding to have come into the open and courted death. More is the pity. What a difference it would have made if they had bravely offered themselves as a non-violent, willing sacrifice! Oppose with ahimsa if you can, but go down fighting by all means if you have not the non-violence of the brave. Do not turn cowards.

There was a time when the most casual remark from me was honoured as a command. Such is not the case today. Man after all is mortal. We are born only to die. Death alone is the true friend of man. [Birth and death] are like the two sides of a coin.

How did we react in Bihar? Man's claim to humanity consists in his magnifying his own fault a million times and minimizing others' faults correspondingly. You ought to know that I have been to villages where death reigned supreme. But in spite of it if I feel like it I would certainly go to the Punjab. But now I am doing the same work from here. I believe I have calmed down Bihar to some extent. Naturally it could be only with God's grace, without which nothing happens. Why, I had said to none else than Master Tara Singh that I was the true heir of Guru Govind Singh and not he.... Matters can be mended only if you try to understand this without getting excited.

5. 'League Relief Parties for Riot Areas'

Dawn, 8 April 1947.

Lahore Monday.—The Punjab Muslim League Committee of Action today heard the report on post-riot conditions obtaining in Amritsar from Mr Abu Saeed Anwar, Editor of the Muslim League weekly, Pakistan, deputed by the Committee to study the situation in Amritsar.

The Committee of action today also deputed Nawabzada Zulfiqar Ali, Mirza Hadi Ali, Councillors of the Lahore Corporation, to visit Amritsar along with Mr Abu Saeed Anwar tomorrow.

In order to explain relief work for the riot victims a Committee of Action has been formed for the city of Amritsar superseding the Working Committee of the Amritsar City Muslim League. The Committee of Action consists of Sheikh Sadiq Hassan Malik, Ghulam Nabi, Mr Abdullah Khan, Mr Aftab Ahmad, Mr Anwar Saeed, Ustad Ghulam Nabi, Mian Mohammad Amin, Haji Sanaullah and Khalifa Ahmad Din.

Maulana Dadood Ghaznavi, MLA and Chaudhry Abdul Karim, President of the Lahore Civil Lines Muslim League, were today deputed by the Punjab Muslim League Committee of Action to visit Gurgaon and Ludhiana respectively.

Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan, deputed by the Provincial League to assist and advice local Leaguers in connection with the rehabilitation, commercial and other problems due to recent riot, left for Lahore after four busy days. He visited riots victims of all communities in hospital and all the affected areas and heard Muslim grievances and discussed matters with local authorities and representative of commercial interests.—API

6. Relief Work Should Be Non-communal

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Bhimsen Sachar, 14 April 1947
SWJN, Vol. II, p. 304.

New Delhi

My dear Bhimsenji,

I have received reports from creditable sources that the relief fund that you have started in the Punjab is used for Hindus and Sikhs only and Muslims are specifically excluded. Indeed I was told that the sponsors of the relief fund objected to state in public that the fund was for all. This news has rather upset me and Gandhiji was also put out by it. I am quite clear in my

mind that in any kind of relief work no Congressman can discriminate as between different communities. Relief work is humanitarian work and it loses all its virtue if even humanitarianism assumes a communal garb. It may be, of course, that most of the cases demanding relief are Hindu or Sikh. But our declared object must be to give relief wherever it is needed regardless of community, religion or creed. In the past I have refused to associate myself with any sectarian organization or relief fund and I do not wish to do so now.

I hope the news I received was not correct. In any event an open declaration should be made.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. 'Harijans Not Safe in "Domain of Pakistan": Mr P.S. Azad's View'

Extract from a Report from *The Tribune*, 20 April 1947.

Lahore April 19.—Mr Prithvi Singh Azad MLA, Member, Constituent Assembly, has issued the following statement in reply to the various statements made by some pro-Muslim League Scheduled Caste leaders:

The Muslims though in a majority in this province have utterly failed to safeguard the lives and properties of the minority communities and the partition of the Punjab has become inevitable. The recent disturbances in Bengal and the Punjab have revealed that the Harijans are not at all safe in the domain of Pakistan if at all it is created in these two provinces. Principally, Harijans stand for a united Punjab but the prevailing circumstances have compelled us to support the demand of the partition of the Punjab which would undoubtedly solve the various interlinked problems of the Hindus, Sikhs and the Harijans. One factor is, however, to be borne in mind and that is that the Harijans are thickly populated in the proposed Eastern zones. Their population is 21.8 per cent of the total populace of the Hindus of the Punjab. In the Ambala and the Jullundar divisions their population is 12,35,673 as compared with the total population of 50,50,286 of the Hindus, namely, 25 per cent or one-fourth of the total Hindu population. In the Ambala and the Jullundar Divisions the population of the Sikhs is 15,62,704 which includes most of the Ramdasia and Mazhabi Sikhs who, for all intents and purposes,... These facts clearly reveal that in the proposed Eastern zone the Harijans are more in numerical strength than the Sikhs, which also justify the claim of the Harijans in the proposed cabinet of the said zone without which the partition scheme would be all farce and a dumb show. The past experience of all the ages have shown that a non-Harijan minister has very little sympathy for the inner feeling of the Harijan and it becomes incumbent on the originator and supporters of this scheme to reserve a seat in the cabinet of the said zone for the Harijans. We are not at all safe in the Pakistan and the notion of the few Scheduled Castes that the League would support us is all baseless, and is only a tool, to create a gulf in the solidarity of the Harijans. They being ignorant of the hard facts and being under the magic wand of the Muslim League and having tasted the dainty dishes of the League fail to distinguish the real harbingers of equality, liberty and fraternity. In the future political life the sacred and ancient Hindu cult of which we too are the members would guide the destinies of the mother India.



8. 'Bihar Muslims Coming Back: Govt's Relief Plans'

The Tribune, 23 April 1947.

PATNA, April 22.—The Bihar Government have put into operation a new rehabilitation scheme estimated to cost about Rs 2 lakhs during the next three months to help the repatriation of the Muslim refugees from the towns to their villages.

The scheme is proposed to be put into effect initially at 15 camps in the rural areas of Patna, eight in the Monghyr district and four in Gaya, each with a capacity to accommodate 500 people. The refugees numbering 20,000 who are in the Government relief camps in the towns will be transferred to the rural camp nearest their original villages, pending their final resettlement in their own hearths and homes. A proposal to give them freedom to select the places for their habitation, is also under consideration of the Government.

The town relief camps, once vacated, will be converted into transit camps to house the refugees who are expected to return from Bengal in response to Gandhiji's appeal. Rural camps are to be housed in school buildings, mosques, and other permanent structures available, as tents will be unsuitable for hot weather. Free rations are to be supplied to the refugees by the Government and will be continued till three weeks after their return to their homes.

A new rehabilitation plan of the Government for expediting house-building programme for the refugees is also engaging the attention of the authorities.

According to the plans, 700 houses are expected to be completed every month. The work in this respect had been greatly hampered because of the obstructions put up by interested quarters in the way of the refugees returning home.

A large number of refugees has been returning from Bengal in response to Gandhiji's peace efforts but the process has been impeded by Calcutta disturbances. The reports received, however, indicate that hundreds of them will be coming back soon when conditions return to normal.—United Press.

9. 'Ambedkar Neither Supports Nor Rejects Bengal Partition'

Dawn, 29 April 1947.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar, President, Scheduled Castes' Federation, in an interview in New Delhi on Sunday said that the Federation had not come to any conclusion on the question of partition of Bengal and the Punjab nor had it any desire to prejudge the issue.

If the Hindus wanted partition, he said, they would have to satisfy the Scheduled Castes on the following points. Firstly, what protection are the Hindus prepared to offer to the Scheduled Castes under the new constitution as against what the Muslim League would be ready to offer?

Secondly, where will the boundary line be drawn?

Thirdly, will there be provision for the exchange of population?

And fourthly, what provision are the Hindus prepared to make for the economic rehabilitation of the Scheduled Castes who, as a result of division, will be left within the Muslim zone and who will be brought over to the Hindu zone as a result of exchange of population?

Unless these points were cleared, Dr Ambedkar added, it would not be possible for the Federation to give a clear lead on the issue of the partition of Bengal and the Punjab.—API



10. Statements Made by Refugees of Tippera and Noakhali

Unstarred Questions in Bengal Legislative Assembly, 30 April 1947

Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings, Vol. LXXII, No. 3, West Bengal State Archives.

MR AMULYA CHANDRA ADHIKARI: (a) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that one Deputy Magistrate has recorded the statements of refugees of Tippera and Noakhali?

(b) If the answer to (a) be in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(i) how many of those are of rape;

(ii) how many of those are of murder;

(iii) how many of those are of arson; and

(iv) how many of those are of looting?

(c) Have the Government taken cognisance of the crimes and sent orders to the respective district authorities to take necessary action?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT, (the Hon'ble Mr H.S. Suhrawardy):

(a) *Noakhali*.—No; but four of the statements taken by a Sub-Deputy Collector of Tippera related to Noakhali.

Tippera.—Yes; by a Sub-Deputy Collector.

(b) *Noakhali*.—

(i) Four.

(ii) Four

(iii) One.

(iv) Four

Tippera.—

(i) Eighty-Four

(ii) Fourteen

(iii) Forty-One

(iv) Sixty-Four

(c) Police investigation is proceeding. ...

11. Demand for Anglo-Indian Representation in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly

Letter from C.E. Gibbon to M.A. Jinnah, 2 May 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 678–9.

CONFIDENTIAL

14 RATENDONE ROAD, NEW DELHI,

Dear Mr Jinnah,

I have read your recent statement calling on the leaders in the Punjab to prepare themselves for 'a separate Constituent Assembly' for Pakistan. In that statement, reference is made to the guaranteeing of 'minority rights'. I am not clear as to whether this embraces 'minority representation' in this Assembly, and am naturally perturbed in my mind on this issue.

I am writing to ask you kindly to keep the question of 'minority representation' in mind before any scheme is finally devised. I realize that this is a complex matter, but I have no doubt that you will give it your anxious consideration, and devise ways and means whereby my Community will not be forgotten and incorporated in a constituency in which either the Congress Party or the Hindu Mahasabha will have the upper hand.

It has occurred to me that a possible solution would be for you to give Anglo-Indians direct representation, or an allotment of seats from the *majority quota*. In the latter case, Anglo-Indian representatives could be elected in the same manner as has been done by the majority party in the existing Constituent Assembly.

If you can spare some time to see me, before I leave for Lahore, on the 6th or the 7th May, I shall be grateful, as I have now to shoulder the task of consolidating the Anglo-Indian community in the Western Pakistan area.

With my kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

C.E. GIBBON

mla

12. 'Bihar Muslims' Prospects in Sind: Exchange of Property Issue'

Dawn, 5 May 1947.

Mr Mohammad Yunus of the Central Relief Committee has sent the following communication to 'Dawn':

'I am constantly receiving a very large number of inquiries about the prospect of the rehabilitation of Bihar Muslims in Sind. I am issuing this statement so that the public may know what the situation is.

Before giving the information, it is necessary to state the background which has led to this desire of the people to go to other provinces. I have always been opposed and am still opposed to any exodus of Bihar Muslims to any other province. I have always done and will do my best to prevent it as far as it lies in my power. Before the carnage it was impossible to imagine that people would leave their hearths and homes. But now I find it difficult to persuade them to stay in their hearths and homes. It is not my desire to induce people to go to other provinces, nor have I any right to guarantee them any safety in this province, as I have not the means to do so. It is for the Bihar Government to guarantee them the necessary safety and for the major community to create the necessary atmosphere, which will induce Bihar Muslims to remain in this province.

Exchange of population, however, under the present circumstances is a desirable thing, but that is only possible when two parties agree; and as a matter of fact some Hindus of Sind have expressed the desire to exchange properties with Muslims of Bihar and some Muslims of Bihar have expressed a similar desire. I appeal to them to send full particulars of their properties to the Secretary, Bihar Relief Committee marked on the top of the envelope "exchange of properties department." This will be entered in a book which is being maintained for the purpose, and necessary information will be given to those who desire any information on the subject, and possible exchange of properties arranged I strongly urge Muslims of Bihar not to sell their properties cheaply and suffer unnecessary loss.

Warning to Muslims

I wish to warn all Bihar Muslims that they should on no account go to Sind with any hope of obtaining service from the Government. I am opposed to any Bihar Muslim going to Sind and seeking Government employment. It must be remembered that Sind, though in area it is as big a province as Bihar, its population is about one-tenth of the population of Bihar. Therefore the number of services is very few, and even all the Sind Muslims cannot be provided with service in Sind. I may however mention that doctors, compounders, engineers, overseers and sub-overseers are needed there, and qualified men of these professions may go and seek employment, and they may get even Government or District Board employment.

I may however mention that there are various other avenues in which people can profitably employ themselves in Sind. There is scope for Muslim restaurants all over Sind in cities such as Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Shikarpur, Jacobabad and other places. People may also be usefully employed in carrying on the trades of rice hulling, handloom weaving and other things, with a small capital between five to ten thousand rupees. There is also scope for small Muslim traders who may engage themselves to sell vegetables, grain, cloth and other things. People may also take up the business of carting by running motor trucks, camel trucks, horse trucks and other things, which are all paying concerns. People may also get employment in private concerns provided they are honest and intelligent, but they will have to seek for employment themselves and those who want to go to Sind must keep expenses at least for three months.

There is great dearth of houses towards which Government is helping by requisitioning huts, which people of moderate means can secure on rents ranging from Rs 20 to 50. The Sind Government is also contemplating the construction of a Bihar Colony very close to Karachi where nearly twenty thousand Biharis can be accommodated. This will be practically a well-planned Colony of about 1,000 acres consisting of 1,600 plots of 1/8th of an acre, 400 of 1/4th of an acre, 200 of 1/2 of an acre, and 100 of 1 acre. The 1/8th acre plots will be given to the public for a nominal sum, and all other plots above 1/8th of an acre will be settled at a reasonable price. The amount has not yet been fixed. In 1/8th of acre plots, the Government will build the house on 1/3rd area of the plot and 2/3rds will be open space. The cost of these buildings will be about Rs 3,000 each. 25 per cent of the price will be paid by the applicant for the plot at the time of taking possession and the balance in small instalments, the amount and period of which has not yet been fixed.

Modern Amenities

This city will have all modern amenities of life. There will be two parks, two mosques, a Musafirkhana, a boys' HE School, a girls' HE School, a boys' Madrasa and a girls' Madrasa, a Hospital, a Dispensary, Telegraph and Post Office and a Police Station. All buildings will have flush system and water pipes laid on throughout with electricity in the Colony. In the plots other than 1/8th of an acre, only 1/4th portion of each plot will be built upon, and the plan will have to be approved and sanctioned by the Government before the building is commenced.

No person will be given more than one plot. Members of the same family or relations may apply for settlement of adjoining plots, but they will not be allowed to amalgamate the plots and separate buildings will have to be built. For agriculture also the Sind Government has decided to give 18 to 24 acres of fertile irrigated lands to Bihar refugees per family on easy terms. The price of these lands will vary from Rs 100 to Rs 250 per acre according to its quality and productivity. Only 10 per cent of this price will be charged at the time of settlement and the balance will have to be paid in 20 equal yearly instalments. This will give the settlers both

proprietary and tenancy rights and they will become peasant proprietors of these lands. They will have to pay water rate which includes revenue and rent only for every acre at the rate of Rs 5 to 7 per acre for the quantity of land actually cultivated by them. No other charge will be payable. Government will also help them in building residential houses.

These are the necessary informations which I hope will be of some use to those who desire to go to Sind.'

13. Relief Arrangements for Refugees in Hardwar

Letter from G.B. Pant to Vallabhbhai Patel, 5 May 1947

B.R. Nanda (Ed.), *Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant*, Vol. XI, p. 139.

Lucknow

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I have just arrived here after spending some time with the refugees at Hardwar. Necessary arrangements for relief have been made. We had offered them one of our camps at a distance of about three miles from Hardwar, but they prefer to stay in the town. I think sufficient accommodation is available for the people who are there at present in the *dharmshalas* and other buildings. So there need not be any difficulty. I have also informed them that if they choose to shift to Dehra Dun, it will be possible to find suitable buildings for them there also. A non-official committee has been formed to look after their needs and comforts and one of our prominent members of the Legislature has kindly undertaken to devote his time and energy mainly to this matter. He will be going to Hardwar tomorrow and from there to Dehra Dun within a week.

Shankar Prasad is willing to take up the responsibilities of the office which is to fall vacant at Ajmer on the 10th. We will be prepared to spare him, though it will not be easy for us to find a suitable successor to take his place. I have discussed the matter with the Chief Secretary and he has not yet been able to suggest any man. However there being no option, we will have to find the best man we can. I am afraid, however, that Shankar Prasad will not be able to take charge for another four to six weeks. The situation is particularly delicate in Meerut district. Besides, this is the season for procurement of foodgrains and Meerut is one of our principal centres.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,
G.B. Pant

14. Apprehension among the Hindu Minority in Quetta

Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Jawaharlal Nehru, 8 May 1947

P.N. Chopra (Ed.), *Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, Vol. XII, pp. 80–1.

NEW DELHI

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

A deputation of Hindus and Sikhs from Quetta met me yesterday. I understand that they have seen you also. From what they told me, it appears that about 90 per cent of private property in

Quetta belongs to non-Muslims. As a result of recent riots in the Punjab and NWFP, there is a great deal of uneasiness and apprehension prevailing amongst Hindus and Sikhs in Quetta. The position is made worse owing partly to the character and population round about Quetta and partly to the worse numerical proportion of non-Muslims. It is alleged that most of the Muslims are armed and the non-Muslims have got no arms. As far as I could make out, a great sense of insecurity prevails and there is absolute lack of confidence in local officers in regard to protection of life and property. To make matters worse, a conference of League workers was recently held and was presided over by Chowdhuri Kaliquzzaman. At this Conference, some violent speeches were made—the worst being that of Muslim professor from Lahore.

I feel that something should be done not only to allay panic and instill [*sic*] a greater sense of security but also to safeguard life and property in Quetta. It is obviously wrong to reserve strong action until events force us to take it, and that too, after the mischief has been done. What is wanted is vigorous and prompt preventive action. I do not know to what extent it would be possible to leave the initiative to local officers. It depends on the set-up and your confidence in their ability to deal with the situation effectively and impartially. I personally feel that the local officers should be warned in time that the responsibility for preserving law and order and ensuring protection of life and property of minorities lies on them and the Central Government will see that no delinquency in this regard is tolerated. They may also be told that vigilance is required at the precautionary and preventive stage as well as after the event, should any unfortunate occurrence take place. A special report may be called about the present situation and the action which the Agent-General proposes to take to create confidence and to prevent disorder.

If you consider it advisable, you can either consult the Viceroy on this subject or show him a copy of this letter. I feel that the matter brooks no delay.

Yours sincerely,
VALLABHBHAI PATEL

15. 'Bengal Partition Move, a Caste Hindu Attempt to Break Scheduled Caste Solidarity—Mandal'

Extract from a Report from *Dawn*, 14 May 1947.
Calcutta, Monday

Mr J.N. Mandal, Law Member, Government of India, addressing a meeting of Scheduled Castes during the week-end expressed apprehensions at the plight of the Scheduled Castes when the British quit India 'and Caste-Hindus took up the reins of Government in their own hands.' The time had come, he said, for the Scheduled Castes to decide what role they would play in the future administration of free India.

The meeting, which was held at Kholapota Bazar in the suburban district of 24-Parganas, passed a resolution opposing the partition of Bengal and demanding separate electorates for the Scheduled Castes.

Mr Mandal said that when both the Congress and the Muslim League were fighting for power, the Scheduled Castes should also try to get their due share of power in the India of tomorrow. He reminded his audience of the 'atrocities perpetrated by Caste Hindus on Scheduled Castes in different parts of India.' These were not printed by the 'Caste Hindu

Press' and even an enquiry was not held by the Congress Governments in spite of his best efforts in this respect.

Describing the move for partition of Bengal as a Caste Hindu attempt to break the solidarity of the Scheduled Castes, Mr Mandal asked who would save the Scheduled Castes in a mutilated Bengal. How would the Hindu leaders protect east Bengal after partition when they could not protect them now, when Bengal was united? There should be an understanding with the Caste Hindus as to the rights and privileges of Scheduled Castes before the former pressed for a partition of Bengal.

He warned the supporters of the partition move that they would not get peace unless they solved the Scheduled Castes problem in the Province....

16. Ministers Visit Riot-affected Areas in D.I. Khan

Unamended¹ Text of a Report from *The Hindustan Times*, 19 May 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 33/11/47, NAI.

HINDUSTAN TIMES

(From our Correspondent)

Peshawar, May 19.—Mr Mehrchand Khanna, Finance Minister, and Khan Mohammed Yahya, Education Minister, Frontier Province, visited the riot-affected areas in Dera Ismail Khan on May 10. I was allowed to accompany them on this tour.

Dera Ismail Khan District, before the present disturbances began, had about 50,000 members of the minority communities forming nearly 14 per cent of its total population—the largest percentage in a province with an average of seven per cent minority population. Nearly half of them lived in Dera Ismail Khan city and the other half was spread over the rural areas. Tank, Kulachi, Paharpur and Paroha were important trading centres with substantial minority population. In Tank alone more than 4,000 minority community members were engaged in various flourishing trades. Hardly a soul had evacuated till the trouble began on April 15. 'We were living peacefully and there was no communal question till then', some minority community members pointed out to the ministers.

The last batch of evacuees was brought to Dera Ismail Khan from the surrounding villages under military escort the day we arrived there by plane. Thousands of refugees [*sic*] (women and children included) having lost their all had already left for different parts of India with the hope of starting fresh their lives.

Over 10,000 men, women [*sic*] and children are still living in about half a dozen relief centres located in various temples, guardwaras and schools in the city. They depend on free rations of food and clothing from the Government and other non-official charitable institutions. They are compelled to live under unhygienic and insanitary conditions. In many cases families consisting of over a score were huddled together in a small room which can hardly accommodate even one small family under normal conditions. They cook in the open. Water supply is not adequate. Most of them complained to the Ministers that the supply of rations was inadequate. It is far less than what League prisoners in Frontier jails are being allowed.

The Ministers gave a sympathetic hearing to the evacuees' complaints and asked the local authorities to do the needful. The help given by local authorities does not go far. A band of selfless workers are doing their bit to relieve their distress. But many more such persons are needed if some sort of order is to be evolved out of the prevailing chaos.

Refugees from different villages waited upon the Ministers and told them their tales of woe. With many their chief concern was their standing crops and their belongings left behind under the custody of the local authorities. While they were full of admiration and praise for the help the military had rendered none of them had the least confidence in the police. The worst tragedy had taken place at Mallana village, about seven miles from Dera Ismail Khan *where 54 men, women and children are alleged to have been burnt alive and about half a dozen kidnapped*. As far as loss of property is concerned Tank has suffered the most in rural areas. Shops and houses belonging to the Minority community have been reduced to ashes. Thanks to the valiant fight put up by Sardar Assad Jan Khan, a Congress MLA, and his supporters at Kulachi, against tribal raiders, Kulachi has escaped with comparatively minor loss.

One could not help being struck by the courageous outlook of the evacuees. In, most villages they had put up a stiff fight with the help of their peace-loving fellow Muslims against League-cum-official hooligans. They surrendered only after their last cartridge had been fired in self-defence or when the military had arrived to evacuate them. In most cases they know the culprits and are prepared to go back to their villages to identify them before the authorities and rescue their belongings. They are reluctant to quit the villages where they were born and bred up. Even the few remaining inhabitants of Mallan village showed their willingness to return as soon as conditions permitted. They assured Mr Mehrchand Khanna that they were true Pathans.

As we walked through the bazaars of Dera Ismail Khan we noted the complete and total destruction that had taken place there as a result of the arson indulged in by some League processionists in the presence of officials. About a thousand shops had been looted and gutted. Even educational and municipal institutions were not spared. The well-equipped library in Bhratri College had been reduced to ashes. The major portion of the 4,000 bags of sugar lying in the Town Hall had been destroyed by the fire. Most of the worst cases of arson had occurred near the police stations.

To understand the forces working behind the Dera Ismail Khan tragedy one has to revert to Pandit Jawaharlal's visit to NWFP in October, 1946. It may be recalled that the friendly reception which Pathans gave him at Jandola where he paid a surprise visit at the instance of Badshah Khan was in sharp contrast to the shows arranged for him at Razmak and Miranshah under the personal supervision of Mr Packman, Resident, Waziristan. The warm reception given to Pandit Nehru was resented by the anti-Congress authorities. Hence a Pakistan conference was soon after organized at Dera Ismail Khan to which several hundred Waziris were imported in Government Lorries. League volunteers armed with spears tried to march through the streets. Thanks to Dr Khan Sahib's vigilance and precautionary measures taken by the authorities under his pressure the city escaped communal fire.

But the conspiracy to discredit the officers and the tribal people who were responsible for giving Pandit Nehru a befitting welcome did not end there. A tense atmosphere was created at Tank towards the end of December when about half a dozen raids took place in the villages adjoining Tank. The Deputy Leader of the League Party publicly urged his audience at several places to avenge the Bihar wrongs.

Mr Dilawar Khan was at that time acting as the Deputy Commissioner of Dera Ismail Khan. He was suspended on charges of corruption and Dewan Shiv Sharan Lal, Assistant Commissioner, Tank, was appointed in his place. This seems to have further exasperated the reactionary clique. The League championed the cause of Mr Dilawar Khan and so called League agitation in Dera Ismail Khan was designed to avenge this step on the part of the Ministry.

But in spite of all the intrigues and machinations of the League leaders the heart of the Dera Ismail Khan inhabitants remained sound. The League then resorted to the practice of hiring people to carry on the agitation.

The Frontier Governor was however interested in provoking incidents which would strengthen his hands in facilitating his taking over the administration of the province. Before going to Delhi to attend the Governors' conference on April 15—the very day on which the trouble started in Dera Ismail Khan—he desired a flare-up in some part of the province so that he could raise the issue afresh with the Viceroy that only section 93 rule could save the province from destruction. Because of the strong Khudai Khidmatgar organization Peshawar and Mardan did not offer the League a congenial soil to start their movement and discredit the Ministry. The rift between the Deputy Commissioner and the District staff in Dera Ismail Khan provided the mischievous elements the necessary material to start a communal flare-up.

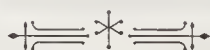
Those minority community members whom we met did not express resentment against the majority community as such. They gratefully acknowledged the help they had received from many of their majority community neighbours. Many people who had voted for the League came forward to offer the minority communities protection in their hour of need. It was not a question of the Congress and the League, much less a question of Hindus and Muslims. It was a question of the British Raj versus the popularly elected Congress Ministry. They have been made scapegoat because the reactionary elements hoped to use their miserable plight as an argument against the Ministry and in favour of the Governor's rule. Most of them clearly realize this.

The Dera Ismail Khan tragedy has exposed the imperialist game in all its nakedness. The hidden hand behind the Noakhali, Bihar and Western Punjab riots could perhaps be perceived only dimly. But it is most clearly and unmistakably visible in the case of Dera Ismail Khan disturbances. Most persons in Dera Ismail Khan knew that the Resident of Waziristan, the Superintendent of Police, Dera Ismail Khan, and the Assistant Commissioner, Tank, worked hand in glove with the Governor, Sir Olaf Caroe. Many representations made to Lady Mountbatten during her visit here contained clear allegations against these officials.

The Pathans of the NWFP have reached a stage from where they have to forge their destiny through their own organized strength and not depend upon Whitehall or viceregal Lodge to do justice. The demand for an independent sovereign State for the Pushtu-speaking people is born out of this conviction. It is meant to defeat all the clever arguments and the insurmountable hurdles which the reactionary elements both British and Indian, are trying to put in the way of the independence of the Pathans. The new youth organization Zulme Pakhtoon, represents the will of the Pathan youth to achieve their ideal or perish in the cause.

To thousands who have lost their all in life, it is of the last consequence whether the Deputy Commissioner is to blame or the Superintendent of Police. It is an established fact that *not only* the forces of law and order in the district looked on with indifference while this all-consuming fire was raging throughout the district, *but they actually dipped their fingers in the blood of the innocent. They are reported to have provided guns and cartridges to the goondas. They are also reported to have participated in the loot and even today are alleged to be helping themselves to the property which the evacuees have left under their custody when they fled for safety.*

¹ The italicized portion in this document was censored.



17. Refugee Problems Surfacing in United Provinces

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to G.B. Pant, 22 May 1947

SWJN, Vol. II, pp. 335–6.

Mussoorie

My dear Pantji,

I am here for just four days and am returning to Delhi on Sunday next. On my way down I shall spend a few hours in Dehra Dun and visit the Indian Military Academy, St. Dunstan's, and meet some Congress colleagues.

I am rather worried about the refugee situation that is developing in this province. I have no doubt you are doing all that is necessary in regard to it. The main problem is, of course, that of Hardwar. A minor problem is that of Dehra Dun where the richer people have gathered and are throwing about their money in buying up houses, shops and other things, and generally upsetting everything. There is a growing feeling against them and I fear we might have a regular UP versus Punjab sentiment which would be unfortunate.

You will remember my mentioning to you the desirability of placing one of the war camps near Dehra Dun at the disposal of these refugees for the present at least. You said that this would require the permission of the Defence Department. I am sure this permission will be obtainable. This seems a quick way of dealing with the situation and canalizing it. I hope you will look into this matter.

I expect to meet you in Delhi at the time of the Working Committee meeting. Gandhiji is due to arrive there on the 26th. Meanwhile disgraceful things are happening in Lahore. We have arrived at a crisis when there must be final decisions and final authorities to deal with every situation that arises.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

18. Problems Created by Influx of Refugees

Unamended¹ Text of an Indian News Agency Press Advice, 22 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 33/11/47, NAI.

INDIAN NEWS AGENCY TELEGRAMS
FOR PRESS ADVICE

Lucknow

Mr Mohan Lal Saxena, MLA (Central) in a statement says: 'The tragic happenings in NWFP and the Punjab *entailing self-immolation by scores of women and children besides those who have been killed, burnt or outraged and forcibly converted* have compelled Hindus and Sikhs of these provinces to leave their home towns and villages to seek refuge in other places. Besides about twenty thousand in Hardwar and ten thousand in Dehradun district there are about ten thousand refugees in other districts of UP. Most of the refugees are well to do and do not as yet require any pecuniary assistance. Efforts are undoubtedly being made to help these unfortunate brethren of ours both by individuals and public bodies. But the problem created by the influx of such large numbers of men and women can alone be tackled by the Government with its large resources and organization.

'I am sure the Congress Government at the centre will have to take the whole question in its own hand and to arrange it on a planned and all India basis.

What the people of these provinces expect of the provincial government is as follows: Firstly, it should not fight shy of coming to the help of these unfortunate men and women who had to run away from their own provinces for want of protection *to their life and honour, because they happen to be Hindus and Sikhs*. Secondly, government should take such steps as were taken for helping refugees from Burma during the war. Besides special officers at Hardwar and Dehradun there should be a central office at the headquarters of the government whose function should be to collect information from all districts regarding the refugees.

It should also publish periodical bulletins giving information regarding the refugees as well as instructions for their benefit and guidance. The District Magistrate should also be instructed to receive and forward declarations from the refugees regarding their property and other things.

Thirdly there are a number of war prisoners camps in Dehradun and other districts which should be acquired from the Government of India and should be made available for housing the refugees after suitable additions and alterations.'

Mr Saxena suggests that women and children should be evacuated from danger zones to places of safety where arrangements should be made not only for their board and lodging but also for their education. This work should be undertaken by various provincial governments and if necessary in cooperation with the government of neighbouring states and provinces or even the central government.—API.

¹ The italicised portion in this document was censored.

19. Rehabilitation Work by Hindu Mahasabha

Extracts from the Report by Secretary of Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha,
26 May 1947

S.P. Mookerjee Papers, Subject File No. 32, First Installment, NMML.

Visited on the 1st May, 1947

Name of the Centre—Karpara Centre

Address—PO Karpara, PS Ramganj, Dt. Noakhali

In-charge: Babu Surendra Kumar Das up to April.

Opened on February, 1947

In-charge (Present) Babu Anukul Chakraverty

Date of Reconstitution—8-5-47

ACTIVITIES

I. Agriculture

6 bullocks were purchased with Hindu Mahasabha money (Rs 925). Those are in custody of the volunteers and the Officer-in-charge of the Centre. About 4 (four) kanis of land were cultivated, (bullocks being purchased towards the close of the season). Three servants, one to keep the bullocks and two to plough the land, have been appointed. Their monthly wages are Rs 6 plus food and Rs 32-8-0. each of the ploughmen respectively. Cultivation is continuing and more land will be cultivated. Money raised from the owners of the land for cultivation—Rs (...text missing)

Note: There was agricultural boycott, the Muslim cultivators refusing to plough the land of the Hindus. So bullocks were purchased by the Hindu Mahasabha. The Muslims are now cultivating the land of the Hindus.

Excepting the land of Rajendra Babu (about one kani which lies uncultivated, the owner of the land taking no interest whatsoever and the land being left in case of Sailesh Babu, a communist living in the house of Rajendra Babu) all lands belonging to the Hindus of this locality have been cultivated. ...

IV. Defence

No organization of defence worth the name has yet been made. Village Defence Party should be formed.

V. Rehabilitation

About 50 per cent of the evacuees have returned for rehabilitation. More are expected to come soon. ...

Decision

- (1) 5 Local Volunteers will get Rs 15 per month without food.
- (2) Medical Unit should be reopened.
- (3) Appointment of Babu Anukul Chandra Chakraverty as Hony. Secretary and Officer-in-charge of the Centre is confirmed.
- (4) For the Training and Organization of Volunteers, the service of the INA, Punjabi Sikh how [sic] staying at Karpara should be secured and if necessary an allowance for tiffin not exceeding Rs 15 per month may be paid. And the result of his work should be reported to the District and the Provincial Office fortnightly.
- (5) Appointment of Manoranjan Bhopi for keeping the bullocks at Rs 8 per month and food with effect from the 15th May, 1947 confirmed.
- (6) Appointment of two ploughmen on Rs 32/8 per month without food for cultivation is confirmed on condition that no other day labourers will be appointed for weeding purposes....

Makhan Lal Biswas

Secretary

Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha

Visited on 16th and 17th May 47

Borali Relief Camp

PO Faridganj (Chandpur)

Camp Opened on 25-12-1945

Officer-in-charge: Swami Bhaktananda

...**Activities:** At present they are supervising cultivation. Formerly they were helping the Sangathan work and impesting physical training to the younger section of the area....

Rehabilitation:

In the area direct under Borali Camp consisting 15 villages out of the local Hindu population 4113, 2647 repatriated. Most of the repatriated people belong to cultivators and labour class.

Rich people are not coming back, but they are coming occasionally to supervise their properties from the neighbouring villages where they took shelter...

Social Service Undertaken: Officer-in-charge organized 10 to 12 meetings and Pantibhojan (Class denior) was also arranged. Hindus belonging to all sections joined the Pantibhojan. 6 widow marriages were performed. Cloth Sankha Sindur were supplied from the Relief Centre. Small amounts were also spent for each marriage. ...

Visited on the 17th May 47

Name of the Centre—Gupti Centre

Opened on—11th January 1947

Name of the O.C.—Ramesh Chandra Sengupta

Vill. Gupti, PO Sinhergaon. Tippera

Tele: Ramganj Dist Noakhali.

...Rehabilitation:

Out of the total population of 10,175 of the 23 villages under this Centre 8650 people have come back and living in the villages. Thirty families lost 560 houses by arson, out of that only 111 houses have been built with burnt sheets, thatches and other things. But no house is really habitable in the monsoon.

The villages Khajuria and Hamchapur have not yet been rehabilitated due to terror and constant disturbances. Number of Baris burnt in different villages are as follows:

Villages—	Khajuria	..	8 baris
	Gupti	..	3 baris
	Baichatari	..	1 baris
	Mandatali	..	11 baris
	Safalipar	..	10 baris
	Dishua	..	1 baris
	Noagaon	..	6 baris
	Raghavpur	..	1 baris

The O.C. prays that the Mahasabha grants for house construction should be given to most deserving cases.

O.C. is advised to prepare a list which will be placed before the Relief Committee....

REHABILITATION

There are 7 villages under this Relief Center

(1) Paikpara	Rehabilitated	968 out of 2070
(2) Karuilali	-do-	490 out of 917
(3) Jayasree	-do-	155 out of 239
(4) Asta	-do-	617 out of 1091
(5) Bholal	-do-	278 out of 4024
(6) Saisanga	-do-	249 out of 524
(7) Soladanga	-do-	447 out of 577
		<hr/>
		3204 6337

In these villages about 50 per cent of the villagers who left the village have returned with their families. 360 New huts have been already constructed. ...

Mahasabha Organization

A Branch Hindu Mahasabha under the name and style Paikpara Hindu Mahasabha was opened about a month ago. It comprises 7 villages, 543 members enrolled. S. Ananga Mohon Majumder has been elected as President and S. Nakul Chandra Chowdhury as Secretary. Working Committee formed with 12 members. Sub-divisional Quota and Provincial Quota have been paid to S. Haradhan Chakraverty. It is reported that the Hindus of this locality are very much eager to join Hindu Mahasabha. It is expected within a month the number will rise up to 1000.

Makhanlal Biswas

Secretary

Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha

Visited on the 16-5-1947

Name of the Centre: Narayanpur Hindu Mahasava Camp.

Date of opening the centre: 1.3.47

Officer-in-charge: Babu Binayandre Guha (Dattapara)

...Defence

About 100 able bodied young men are ready to undertake training under Hindusthan National Guards. They want a trainer from Calcutta for the purpose. At present there is no activity of Defence Organization for want of a trainer.

The young people are interested in sports they want a volley ball.

There is one Police Camp at Paikpara. 9 Constables under one Habildar are staying in the Camp. They are all Hindu. The presence of the Police has created sense of security in the area.

Social Activities

Panktibhojan, on the Saraswati Puja Day has created tremendous effect among the Hindus of all section. Free mixing and mutual sympathy have been noticed among them.

Requirements

Account submitted up to the 15th of May. The money raised by the centre has covered all expenses made up to that date.

They want Rs 100 for the pured [sic] from the 16th of May.

2 Torches for volunteers, one umbrella are also required.

About 306 families have come back and constructed their houses. They expect a grant from Hindu Mahasabha also as the money which they received from the Government is inadequate for building a complete hut. Officer-in-charge suggests that the artisans and cultivators who have come back should be given grants from Hindu Mahasabha. He has been advised to submit a list of such deserving families, which will be considered by the Provincial Office at Relief Committee Meeting.

Road Construction in Paikpara Village by Hindu Mahasabha

Hindu Mahasabha in co-operation with Congress has taken up Road Construction in Paikpara village. Two roads have already been constructed....

20. Appeal for Retention of British Rule over India

Letter from G. Abraham to M.A. Jinnah, 30 May 1947

Jinnah Papers, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 917–20.

MARTUR, NARASARAOPET TALUK, GUNTUR,

A meeting of the Governing Body of the Scheduled Castes Christians Federation was held on 25 May 1947 at Guntur, which passed the following minutes to be submitted to the Government of India.

1. Voted to bring home to the mind of His Majesty's Government that numerous cases of anarchy, arson and bloodshed have been taking place in many parts of India ever since the declaration of their transferring power to Indian hands (United India) and their quitting India for good is causing in us great dread and dismay; as such our hearts fail us for fear since we know that more dreadful and dolorous events shall surely befall our Motherland as a matter of course after the English left India. The English though [they] came to India first for commercial gains have been appointed as God's custodians to keep her safe from invasions, pillage and plunder and also from internal quarrels and flare-ups, which duties have honestly been accomplished by them until recently. But now they could not wash their hands off from the said guilts as much as the Almighty is still holding them responsible for the safety and protection of India, who knew pretty well that the political leaders who demanded the transfer of power from the English on the pretence of the so-called 'Freedom from British Imperialism' could neither effect an amicable agreement among themselves nor stop the people whom they represent from communal strifes. Seeing our inability to protect our Motherland from foreign invasions and internal chaos of distress we should rather lament over our want of unity and brotherly fellowship among us and agitate for the English remaining in India in order to work along with them for our peace and tranquillity, diverting our attention for the attainment of real freedom from British Imperialism (not chaos), which is certainly possible with the present British Government as they are showing their readiness to part with all.
2. In the face of adverse conditions of castes, creeds, kindreds, babel of tongues and races, very peculiar to India alone, and in view of the indubitable fact that her people have been divided multifariously never to be fused into a united nation again to carry on her own Government independently without the aid of any foreign nation such as that of the British, it is resolved that the British Government be requested through H.E. the Viceroy to revise their decision of transfer of power either to a united India or divided India into that of granting us Dominion Status keeping our country in the British Commonwealth of Nations. This request is being made not because that we are unpatriotic or owing to lack of love on our part towards our Motherland but because of the fact that we are as patriotic, if not, more patriotic than, any community in India and want to sing the glorious patriotic song in the presence of the English youths.

'Rule Indicus (pet name for India), Indicus rules the waves,
Indians never shall be slaves,' instead of
'Rule Britannia, rule the waves,
Britains [*sic* for Britons] never will be slaves.'

But awful terrorism, dolorous destruction [*sic*] of a pandemonium (unlike eternal peace and brotherly fellowship of Heaven) now prevailing in many parts of India, hurry us back to dreadful despair and once more we are forced to agitate for the English remaining in India for their diverting [*sic*] the said dire consequences.

3. Resolved to note with regret, and remark to say, that the action of the present British Government who are directing their dramatic attention and yielding to the demands of the two major parties, the Congress high caste Hindus and the Muslim League, at the express expense of Scheduled Castes' (Christians and others) safety and protection on the pretence of their being minority (but becomes a big majority when compared with the English nation), is highly unjust. If our case is put before a big world court (or better still a court of Heaven) it may be argued that when Germans being a majority nation invaded Poland and other minority nations, England declared war and subdued them. But they are taking a reverse course by enslaving us, the minorities, eternally to the wishes of the two majorities simply because God was with them then and granted them glorious victories over the most powerful nations, that is, Germany and Japan. Perhaps He is not with them now. Therefore, they have made themselves ready to yield to any weak power such as Indian Congress etc. in which case we also make ourselves ready to look up to the Almighty for our protection and safety.
4. The recent decision of the British Cabinet that they are willing to divide India into two big parts (one) Hindustan for the Congress and (two) Pakistan for the Muslims, makes us to note that HM Government pays little or no attention towards the cause of our Scheduled Castes (Christians and others) who being too poor and illiterate could offer now no big name or fame (though they volunteered and fought His Majesty's recent and last European wars but the Congress impeded them), nor could they make the world at large know their unmiserable [*sic*] condition nor the real state of other people of this land but whose (Scheduled Castes) cause has been taken up by one who accomplished great and marvellous things in recent years in bringing to nought the power of Nazism which shook the very foundations of not only the European and other kingdoms but also the British throne and her Empire, namely, Mr Winston Churchill who perhaps admonished by the word of God, expecting no such name or fame but hoping for a reward and a name from an unseen source (Almighty), chose the base and small things (Scheduled Castes) of the world to serve, depicted of them with clear-cut and astounding words, recalling past British pledges regarding their protection by the British Government, produced no useful results before the present British Government. We therefore appeal to them to make good the past British pledges and grant us security, safety and protection.
5. In view of the unchangeable peculiar conditions inherent among the people of India from times immemorial, it is resolved to suggest to the British Government and to HE the Viceroy to grant to India the Dominion Status with a changed plan of Democratic Government while keeping the English who, with all their so-called Imperialism, rendered most meritorious services to our people in making our country from the Himalayas down to Cape Comorin as one big Indian Empire and giving peace and tranquillity which was either fully or partially absent in other ages at the helm of steering [affairs], in order to protect our people from foreign invasion, pillage and plunder and to keep her out of internal strifes has all these years been [*sic*]. Owing to

the above said peculiarities no attention should be paid to the counting of majorities or minorities but the power of administration should be divided into three equal shares and assigned one to the Congress Hindus, one to the Muslim League and the third to the Scheduled Castes (Christians and other minorities). This ratio is suggested to be observed by the Central Government all round, the Provincial Governments to the Village Panchayat Boards. In which case no one needs to clamour for Pakistan or Hindustan or any other *stan*. All leaders who really love our bruised mother India will surely accept this plan and help the British Government and HE the Viceroy to avert all dire consequences from befalling our country. If, on the other hand, the division of India is inevitable, the country should be divided among the three great religions, namely, (1) Hindus (Congress), (2) Muslims and (3) Christians comprising all Scheduled Castes whether Christian or non-Christian and other minorities. This Christianstan should be kept in the British Commonwealth of Nations having Dominion Status. As has been stated by Mr Gandhi that Congress in every Province has become a strong organization of selfish power-seekers and job-hunters, therefore it can be stated that no good Government can be expected of them.

G. ABRAHAM

President,

*The Guntur District Scheduled Castes and
Christians' Federation (Regd.)*

Copy to

1. Mr Winston Churchill through HE The Viceroy of India,
2. HE The Viceroy of India
3. Hon'ble Mr Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Vice-President, Interim Government
4. Mr M.A. Jinnah, President, All India Muslim League

Chapter 24. Volunteer Organizations

1. Need for a Volunteer Campaign to Counter League Propaganda

Letter from Khan Bahadur Saadullah to Vallabhbhai Patel, 29 March 1947
SPC, Vol. IV, pp. 230–1.

6 Commissioner Road,
Peshawar

Respected Sardar Sahib,

I hope Dr Khan Sahib has acquainted you with the latest situation over here. As a whole, barring Hazara district, it is not so bad. The Mullah of Manki was arrested yesterday and thank God that it went off without any incident. However, the situation is tense and we have to mobilize our resources to counteract League propaganda. In spite of the communal frenzy which the League leaders have created, the mass of the people in the rural areas are with us. At present we have 10,000 Red Shirts in Peshawar city. We have also Red Shirts in Mardan, Kohat and Bannu towns. We intend to launch a great campaign against reactionary forces. As you are aware, all this requires a lot of money which is not possible for us to raise here though we are trying our best. In this critical time we need your help more than at any time in the history of the province. Our opponents, that is, the League organization, have enormous funds at their disposal which they spend like water. Our cause is just and it appeals to the heart and head of the people.

Drafting large numbers of volunteers to the city means expenditure. It will be absolutely necessary to keep these volunteers at least for a couple of months for which we require several lakhs of rupees. The exact amount could not be estimated at this stage; we shall be revising our policy and tactics according to the circumstances, but roughly I feel that we shall need about three lakhs of rupees, which may be sent to us [in] 50,000 instalments at an interval of 10 days. I am writing this letter in the presence of Shri Mehrchand Khanna. You had given him a sum of Rs 50,000 for Hazara relief. The whole of it, with your approval on the telephone, has been diverted to meet the present needs.

It is not possible to tap the Frontier Hindus and Sikhs at this juncture. In the first instance they have suffered heavily through loss of life and destruction of property. A large number have already left the province and others are in the course of transit. Business is at a standstill. I need not repeat once again that we are passing through a period of crisis never known in the history of the province.

Sofia sends her respects to you and Maniben.

With kind regards,

Affectionately yours,
Saadullah

2. Report from NWFP

Extracts from the Fortnightly Report on NWFP for Second Half of March 1947,
2 April 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.

...5. The following appreciation is added as an appendix as desired by the Government of India, Home Department in their demi-official letter no. 28/5'46-Poll. (I), dated the 12th December, 1946:

Redshirts.—Small parties of Redshirts continue to attend Congress and Jamiat-ul-Ulema meetings during the period under review marched in processions, and carried Congress flags. The Kamalzai bye-election at Mardan called forth the largest gatherings of redshirt volunteers and during a procession which was held prior to the election, it is estimated, that about 2,100 Redshirt volunteers were present in the procession. During the actual polling, Redshirt volunteers were present near the polling booths in large numbers, but their conduct was peaceful and they cooperated with the district authorities.

On 18th February, at a Muslim League meeting held at Latambar, Kohat District, two ex-Redshirts publicly announced that they had joined the Muslim League, and one then proceeded to burn his red uniform in front of those present.

The estimated number of active members of the Redshirt organization in the Frontier Province is 8,000.

Muslim National Guard.—Muslim National Guards have continued to attend Muslim League meetings, to march in processions and to hold parades, until the middle of February when orders under section 144 Cr. P.C. were announced, first in Mardan, and later in Peshawar City and Cantonments, prohibiting assemblages of more than five persons. The volunteers, as usual, wore their green uniform with badges of rank, carried spears or lathis, and Muslim League flags.

The bye-election in the Kamalzai Constituency attracted a large number of Muslim National Guards from various villages in Peshawar and Mardan Districts, who assisted their supporters at the polling booths. Their behaviour, was, on the whole, peaceful.

A large Muslim League meeting was held on 21st February in Peshawar City, which was attended by about 800 Muslim National Guards, some of whom carried spears and sticks. After the meeting a procession was formed which moved to the house of the Premier of the North-West Frontier Province in Peshawar Cantonments, despite the attempts of the police to disperse them. On arrival at the Premier's house, the processionists threw brickbats at the house, damaging window panes, a car, and the contents of the Premier's office.

In the middle of February, the Muslim League started a civil disobedience movement in this province in Mardan and Peshawar, from whence it spread to all other districts. The movement took the shape of breaking orders issued under section 144 CrPC, picketing of courts, and in Bannu, the picketing of liquor shops. Muslim National Guards, often wearing uniform, were responsible for these attempts to break the law. Their picketing was, on the whole, peaceful, but on occasions, they forced their way into courts and occupied the magistrates' chairs, and hoisted Muslim League flags on buildings.

In Hazara District, however, the volunteers have interfered with trains on the Havelian—Taxila line by standing or lying on the railway line, and by pulling the alarm chord. A favourite

slogan on occasions has been 'Khun Se Lenge Pakistan' (We will achieve Pakistan by shedding blood).

The movement appears to be gathering force and popularity, despite the arrests of some of the leading Muslim National Guards. If the present agitation against the Congress Government in the North-West Frontier Province continues on its existing scale, it obviously has dangerous possibilities, since the large demonstrations which have been, or may be, organized may easily lead to a clash with the authorities, as occurred on 10th March near the Legislative Assembly Hall at Peshawar. On this occasion, the volunteers became unruly and refused to obey directions to disperse, or not to approach the Assembly Hall, with the result that steps had to be taken to disperse them by force.

The estimated strength of Muslim National Guards in the Frontier Province is 5,000.

Khaksars.—A few Khaksar volunteers continued their routine parades in Peshawar and Kohat during the period, and held rallies and route marches. The volunteers wore uniform, and Arab head-dress, and carried burnished spades.

This organization has not acted in any way during the month which might result in an actual breach of the peace, but at the same time its past history, and the rigid discipline, render it a dangerous weapon if unscrupulously used.

The estimated strength of Khaksar volunteers in the Frontier Province is 1,200.

Ahrars.—A few small parties of Ahrar volunteers held spasmodic parades in Peshawar City during the month, wearing uniform and carrying ornamental axes. Ahrar volunteers are not sufficiently well organized, or numerous, to be an immediate danger to public order, but their habit of carrying axes while parading or marching is a dangerous one.

The estimated strength of active Ahrar volunteers in the Frontier Province is 200.

RSS Sangh.—Members of this Hindu organization continued to hold their usual rallies at various towns throughout the province, during the period under report. In Bannu, the volunteers carried spears. After the 24th February, Peshawar City and Cantonments volunteers stopped holding their exercises in public, owing to the promulgation of orders under section 144 CrPC, though they continued them in private.

The RSS Sangh organization sets out to develop the martial qualities in the Hindu race, but in view of the fact that Hindus are in a minority in this province, it would seem that the emphasis laid on physical training, is more of a defensive nature, than any immediate threat to public safety. The activities of the Sangh, however, are looked on with suspicion by the Muslim League.

The estimated strength of RSS Sangh volunteers in the Frontier Province is 2,000.

A few volunteers of the Bajrang Sewak Akhara, Mahabir Dal, Ranjit Dal, Arya Samaj and Akali Dal also held meetings during the month, but their influence is not sufficiently strong to merit notice....



3. Report from Bombay Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bombay for Second Half of March 1947,
3 April 1947
Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.

...Note showing the development of Volunteer Organizations in Bombay Province

(1) **Rashtra Seva Dal**

There has been a marked increase in the membership. Seven new branches have also been opened. The strength of these branches varies from 20 to 40.

Since the recent rally at Satara, the organization is gaining popularity in that District. Most of the political workers of the district have declared that the personnel of the future Indian Army will be drawn from this Dal. At present the organization is not interfering with public peace in the district but it being a militant body of young men, a tendency to take the law in hand might develop and it may prove dangerous eventually.

Two training classes have been opened at Ahmedabad for one month and another at Nasik. The latter is for Dal workers from the Hyderabad State.

At Surat, about 20 volunteers have been working in the Municipal Fire Brigade since March 11th, as the Municipal workers are on strike.

About 50 volunteers of the Dal attended the 'Shahid Bhagat Singh Day' meeting held in Bombay City and collected funds.

(2) **Rastriya Swayam Sewak Sangh**

There has been a general increase in the membership which may be attributed to the communal situation in the country. Eleven new branches have also been opened.

With the object of holding discussions with volunteers from different places regarding the working of the Sangh, a rally of 250 volunteers from East Khandesh, West Khandesh and Nasik Districts was held at Chalisgaon.

At three places in the Thana District night rounds were performed by the volunteers and in Poona City about 1,000 volunteers took part in a moonlight march.

At two places in Greater Bombay 'Gudhi Padva' was celebrated. At one of the places about 1,000 volunteers gave demonstrations in drill, lezim, physical exercises, and other things before an audience of about 4,000.

(3) **Khaksar Volunteer Corps**

This organization is inactive, except at Poona, where an officers' camp was held of about 111 Khaksars from different districts. The programme included flag salutation, prayers, lessons in discipline, and others. This was followed by a route march of about 55 Khaksars in uniform. Two Khaksar leaders from Bombay addressed the camp followers on the importance of prayers, pure life, service to the masses and Hindu-Muslim unity. They also exhorted the Khaksars to sacrifice their lives for the country's freedom and indirectly criticized the obstructionist policy of the Muslim League.

Four Khaksars were arrested in Bombay City for carrying 'Belchas' (spades) but were released later.

(4) **Muslim National Guards**

Six new branches have been opened.

There is a considerable decrease in the membership at Belgaum due to the abolition of some of the branches temporarily opened on account of 'Bara Vafat'.

The Guards performed night rounds at three places in Thana District.

The Bombay Provincial Muslim League Committee had decided to send ten batches of eleven Guards each to the Punjab to participate in the civil disobedience movement and had sanctioned a grant of Rs 7,000 for the purpose, but as the movement was called off in the meanwhile the decision was not put into effect.

The Guards took part in the celebration of the 'Pakistan Day'.

(5) Lok Sena

About 200 volunteers gave demonstrations in physical exercises before the International Youth Commission.

Note: The organization has no influence but the branch at Sholapur is likely to play a leading role in communal riots if they were to occur in future.

(6) Bombay National Guards

Attended the reception given in honour of the International Youth Commission.

(7) Azad Hind Dal

One new branch has been opened.

(8) Sikh Nav Javan Dal

The Dal observed 'Anti-Pakistan Day' by holding a flag salutation ceremony.

Leaflets stating that Sardar Kartar Sing Suthra, the Chief Organizer of the Dal, had misappropriated certain funds of the Akali Dal and that donations towards any funds should not be given to him, were distributed amongst the Sikhs and Hindus.

.....

NB—There was no appreciable activity by the other Volunteer Organizations.

Statement showing the strength of the organizations during the month of March 1947.

(1) Rashtra Seva Dal	56,868
(2) Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh	31,284
(3) Khaksars Volunteer Corps.	215
(4) Muslim National Guards	12,024
(5) Congress Seva Dal	1,500
(6) Independent Labour Party Volunteer Corps	1,065
(7) Rashtriya Seva Samiti	195
(8) Hindu Rashtra Dal	50
(9) Lok Sena	1,675
(10) Bombay National Guards	125
(11) Swastika League Volunteer Corps.	200
(12) Arya Vir Dal	250
(13) Red Guards	800
(14) Samata Sainik Dal	9,065
(15) Azad Hind Dal	1,120
(16) Sikh Nav Javan Dal	200

4. Report from Orissa Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Orissa for the Second Half of March 1947,
10 April 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/3/47, NAI.

...Volunteer Organizations:

Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh: Two new branches were opened and three defunct branches revived during the period under review. Regular parades were held in Raipur and Jubbulpore. At most of the other centres, members were trained in lathi drill and physical exercises. In Balaghat, spears were used in training. Several district branches celebrated their anniversaries with displays of physical, lathi and lezim exercises. Golwarkar, [*sic*] the head of the Sangh, addressed a special meeting of 3,000 on Hindu unity and the aims and objects of the Sangh. He exhorted the audience to follow the example of Hindu warriors and prepare to meet the threat of civil war. He condemned Congress for its futile parliamentary activities and the double faced policy of its capitalist leaders who were actuated by personal gain. At another propaganda meeting, the political situation was described and the need for unity to defend their religion, community and country emphasized. Secrecy was also stressed. Rallies of 500 workers and 1000 volunteers were held at Akola. At private meetings, Golwalkar explained the increasing popularity of the Sangh all over the country and described how the Hindus, in provinces affected by communal trouble, appreciated its utility. He said that the Sangh was not afraid of anybody nor did it want to terrorize anybody. At Jubbulpore some Muslim students are alleged to have been assaulted by Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh members. An enquiry is in progress. An offence under section 120 Railways Act was registered against some Sangh volunteers for assaulting a military sepoy on the Jubbulpore Railway platform.

Azad Hind Dal: Though propaganda continued unabated, the Dal at Nagpur has received a rude shock when some of the ex-INA personnel who had left it had formed a separate body called the Azad Hind Fouz Samiti comprised entirely of ex-INA personnel under the patronage of the provincial ex-INA Relief Committee. The Azad Hind Fouz Samiti has a civilian organization called Azad Hind Fouz Sainik Samiti. A new branch was opened at a village in Yeotmal district. The Dal is active only in Nagpur, Saugor, Chanda and Yeotmal districts. Their activities consist of squad drill and physical training only. The Azad Hind Dal at Nagpur collaborated with the Forward Block in conducting the three day programme of the Royal Indian Navy Day from the 21st to the 23rd February. At the public meeting on the 23rd, the Interim Government was asked to release the Royal Indian Navy Ratings, Indian National Army personnel and other political prisoners still in jail. The arrest of Forward Block leaders during the observance of the Royal Indian Navy Day at Bombay was condemned and the Bombay Government requested to release them immediately. About 200 volunteers in uniform took part in the reception given to Nana Patil on the 3rd March at Nagpur. At a meeting of the Azad Hind Dal held at Harda, speakers denounced local Congress workers in particular and Congress capitalists in general. At another meeting at the same place, the teachers' strike was justified. On the 8th March 1947, about 100 volunteers of the Dal paraded at Sahajpur (Jubbulpore) on the occasion of a Kisan Sabha meeting.

Muslim National Guards: Amraoti and Jubbulpore districts recorded an increase in membership. A new branch was opened in Jubbulpore and another in Bilaspur district.

Members were put through squad drill in addition to training in the use of lathi, sword and dagger. Muslim National Guards at Raipur held parades every morning. Batches of volunteers were posted in different Muslim mohallas to warn the Muslims to be on the alert while anti-Pakistan Day Procession was being taken out in Raipur town. At two meetings held in connection with Id-e-Milad at Jubbulpore, Professor Abdul Quayum of the Aligarh University, advised Muslims to join the Muslim National Guards to equip themselves morally, physically and spiritually to overcome all opposition. Speaking at a similar function, Moulana Burhanul Haq described the Muslim National Guards as the militant arm of the League formed to protect persons irrespective of caste or creed in abnormal times and criticized the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh as definitely anti-Muslim. A camp of Nagpur District Muslim National Guards is being conducted at Suradevi near Kamptee (Nagpur). Details are lacking.

Hindustan Red Army: Two new branches were formed, one at Tumsar (Bhandara) and the other at Itarsi (Hoshangabad). Route marches were conducted at Harda (Hoshangabad). About 40 Hindustan Red Army volunteers led by Dr Vaze took part in the reception given to Nana Patil on the 3rd March at Nagpur. At Gondia (Bhandara) and Itarsi (Hoshangabad) they joined the Congress Socialist Party in the observance of 'Labour Day' on the 4th March. The Hindustan Red Army convened a meeting of 200 at Saoner (Nagpur) at which speeches were made depicting the pitiful plight of cultivators, demanding the suspension of land revenue and the disbursement of loans. A Provincial camp, attended by 20 was inaugurated at Akola by Maganlal Bagdi. The volunteers were housed in tents, the entrance to the grounds being guarded by sentries. The programme included military drill, intellectual classes and games. A uniform of Khaki shirt, red shorts, boots and putties was worn. The camp is reported to have inspired little enthusiasm.

Rashtriya Dal or Veer Bajrang Dal: About 400 volunteers led by Francis Jadhao presented a guard of honour to Nana Patil. Several volunteer organizations participated in the reception but the turn out of the Rashtriya Dal was the best. Nana Patil received a salute from about 150 volunteers of the Dal when he visited their headquarters in the evening. Volunteers displayed Indian games with lathis, daggers, and other things. Nana Patil was then accorded a reception at a meeting of 800. The president Wamanrao Ghorpade, explained the progress of the Dal and claimed that 100 branches of the Dal were functioning in the Province. Nana Patil exhorted the volunteers to be ready for the future struggle and warned them that if the British do not keep their promise of quitting India, the Government offices would be seized by force and the functions of the police and military performed by the volunteers. He also expressed his satisfaction at the progress of the Dal.

Azad Hind Fouj Samiti and Azad Hind Fouj Sainik Samiti: These organizations were started by the Provincial ex-INA Relief Committee towards the end of January last at the instance of ex-INA men R.J. Hatwar and Wali Mohammad, who were turned out of the Azad Hind Dal for misappropriation of funds. The ostensible purpose is to concentrate all ex-INA personnel in the province in one organization but the real object seems to be to break the Azad Hind Dal. The organizations have the support of the Central Indian National Army Relief Committee, which has sent some 40 or 50 ex-INA men to Nagpur for rehabilitation work. Since the occurrence of the rift in the Azad Hind Dal, G.A. Kirde and his colleagues in the Azad Hind Dal are turning their attention to the Azad Hind Fouj Samiti and have formed a committee of the following:

President: L.N. Mishra, ex-INA i/c provincial ex-INA Relief Committee
 Secretary: R.J. Hatwar, ex-INA
 Treasurer: Wali Mohammad ex-INA.

The Secretary was later replaced by Sham Lal Nai, as he was again suspected of misappropriation. The Azad Hind Fauj Samiti is reported to have collected Rs 1500 from subscriptions. The Azad Hind Fauj Sainik Samiti is the civilian counterpart and has some 30 volunteers who are trained by ex-INA personnel. L.N. Mishra is eager to extend the organization to the districts, but nothing has been done so far and its activities are confined to Nagpur only.

Hindusthani Sewa Dal: Three new branches were started during the period. The Bilaspur branch is reported to have 50 swords to be used for training. A flag salutation ceremony was held at Raipur on the 22nd after a march by 60 volunteers through the streets with tri-colour flags. About 500 volunteers led by Suleman Khan Pathan presented a salute to Nana Patil on the 3rd March at Nagpur. When he visited their office later in the day, he was provided with a guard of honour by about 400. In the course of his address, he advised the volunteers not to become dejected over the present turn of political affairs but to keep his personal example before them. He asked them to start volunteer organizations in villages with a view to fight the British if they fail to quit India as promised. Even after the British quit, the volunteers would be needed to establish the rule of peasants and workers in India. About 30 volunteers formed a guard of honour to Nana Patil at Umrer (Nagpur) on the 14th March 1947. He inaugurated the Umrer Tahsil Camp at a meeting of 300 on the 15th. 150 trainees are being put through a course of squad drill and physical exercises....

5. Training and Organization of the Proposed Hindustan National Guards

Letter from R.B. Phadke, Honorary Secretary, Militarization Board, to L.B. Bhopatkar,
 6 April 1947
 AIHM Papers, File No. C-143/1947, NMML.

Office of the Militarization Board
 Maharashtra Mandal
 Tilak Road, Poona

Sir,

With reference to the discussion you had with us the other day on the above topic, I have the honour to submit the following for your perusal and information.

Our Board is ready and willing to undertake the conduct of the Training Class during the summer vacation for your Hindusthan National Guards. The Summer Vacation on this side of India means the period from 1st May to 1st June.

Curriculum

The course of training for the period of one month is outlined as follows:

- (a) Drill without Arms.
- (b) Drill with Arms.

- (c) Physical Training.
- (d) A course of lectures on the Theory and Practice of 'the Military Soldiers in aid of civil power'.
- (e) The indigenous fencing systems of—Lathi, Lakdi, Dagger, Spear, Half-Sword and other things.
- (f) A course of lectures on organization of Guards, strategy and tactics, map reading, population problem and so forth.

Details of (a):

Drill in modern days has been much simplified. The movements are very few but the characteristic feature of modern training is quick mobility.

1. Positions—Stand at ease, Attention, Stand easy.
2. Turnings.
3. Slow March, Mark Time, Halt.
4. Dressing at intervals, Close Dressing.
5. Quick March.
6. Turnings on March.
7. Double March.
8. Diagonal March.
9. Formations at the halt—etc.
10. Platoon in three sections.
11. Advance in column and Retire in column.
12. Formations.
13. Saluting Drill.
14. Changing Directions.
15. Deployment.
16. Street Fighting.

Details of (b):

1. Positions—Stand at ease, Attention, Stand easy.
2. Trail and Order.
3. Shoulder Arms.
4. Present Arms.
5. Change Arms.
6. Sling Arms.
7. Secure Arms.
8. Ground and take up Arms.
9. Fix and unfix Bayonets.
10. Port Arms.
11. Examine Arms.
12. Bayonet fighting.

Details of (c):

Tables 1 to 3 of Army Physical Training.

Details of (d):

A course of lectures by Experts.

Details of (e):

1. About 30 different positions and exercises in Lathi.
2. About 26 different positions and exercises in Dagger.
3. Theory and practice in fencing with Sword and Lakdi.
4. Theory and practice in fencing with spear.

Details of (f):

A course of lectures by experts.

The above is the rough outline of the Training Course to be gone through. It is an intensive and rigorous course which would require at least 4 hours' instruction per day; and if the Trainees stand the Training well during the first week, then instruction will advance and be completed within a month. Candidates have to be very serious about it.

About the cost of Training, we will have to increase our Staff by securing the services of specially trained Army Instructors who have to be paid decently for the work they will put in. Also additional materials will have to be purchased for training. All things considered, each candidate will have to pay our Board Rs 100 (one hundred) for one month's course of training including his Boarding and Lodging.

A minimum number of 50 candidates at least is necessary to make the whole scheme feasible and practicable.

We hope you will give this your due consideration and let us know your decision on or before the 20th of this month.

On hearing from you we shall arrange to take further steps in this matter.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
R.B. Phadke
Hon Secretary,
Militarization Board,
C/O Maharashtra Mandal, Tilak Rd,
Poona 2.

6. Prohibiting Private Armies

Extracts from the Minutes of Second Day of First Governor's Conference, 16 April 1947

TOP, Vol. X, pp. 277-8.

...ITEM 6 PRIVATE ARMIES

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he had been amazed to find what a very large number of 'private armies' there were in India. Altogether it was estimated that there were approximately 413,000 persons in such organizations. These were divided between 12 different private armies, of which the Communists had a strength of only 1,000 and one Hindu Mahasabha organization of over 100,000.

SIR EVAN JENKINS said that the troubles in the Punjab had really begun with an attempt to ban private armies. The Prime Minister had decided to take this course rather than to try to maintain a balance of power between them. The Hindu private army in the Punjab had taken the ban very quietly and so had the Muslims except in Lahore. There had been trouble which was the immediate *casus belli* in the Province. The ban had then been quickly withdrawn and now the Sikhs had started up a private army of their own. He had decided that he could not now consider the question of reintroducing the ban in view of the general situation.

SIR OLAF CAROE said that the Red Shirts, a Congress organization in the NWFP, were one of the best known of all the private armies. They had been started 15 years ago. Since the Congress Ministry had been in power, they had not been much in evidence until recently; but then, without any warning, the Ministry had brought in between 6 and 7,000 Red Shirts in uniform to Peshawar City on the pretext that they were to protect the Hindus there. The military had refused to work in conjunction with the Red Shirts and had withdrawn from Peshawar. The presence of the Red Shirts had stimulated enormous processions on the part of the Muslims, whose organization in the NWFP was called Green Shirts. Then the Red Shirts had been withdrawn by the Ministry—again without him being informed—and a large unofficial fine had been levied to pay for their stay. The presence of the Red Shirts in Peshawar had caused a very dangerous situation which might have become even worse as the Ministry wished to make them into special police and arm them with official rifles.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY asked whether the Central Government could issue an ordinance banning private armies. MR ABELL said that this would not be constitutionally possible. Such legislation would have to be introduced by Provinces.

MR TYSON suggested that the two main parties might order a ban from the Centre. He felt that this would be obeyed. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he would take this suggestion up during the forthcoming meeting at Simla. He would call upon the Party Leaders to have these private armies suppressed and also try and persuade the Central Government to co-ordinate action to this end by Provincial Governments.

SIR FRANCIS WYLIE said that, in the United Provinces, District Magistrates had been authorized to ban the wearing of uniform if the situation required it. He added that he was doubtful of the prospects of persuasion by Party Leaders proving successful. SIR EVAN JENKINS pointed out that Congress did not have to control the Mahasabha if it did not want to.

SIR OLAF CAROE said that he was very doubtful that an appeal not backed up by forcible measures would be successful. With this SIR EVAN JENKINS agreed.

SIR FREDERICK BOURNE pointed out that many of these volunteer organizations regarded themselves more in the nature of athletic clubs. It would not be possible to ban them. HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that he had no objection to athletic clubs as such. The criterion would be that they must not parade through the streets in coloured shirts, nor carry arms. SIR HUGH DOW said that, in one training camp, members of one of these clubs were taught, among other subjects, how to throw acid.

SIR CHANDULAL TRIVEDI said that there were no private armies in Orissa. His Prime Minister had been able to persuade the local Muslim leaders not to form one.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY:

- (i) decided to raise the question of the banning of private armies with the Indian leaders at the Simla conference;
- (ii) invited Their Excellencies the Governors to keep him informed concerning the activities of private armies and of any ideas they might have to abolish them....

7. Report from Bombay Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Bombay for the Second Half of April 1947,
2 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.

...Note showing the development of volunteer organizations in Bombay Province during the month of April

(1) Rashtra Seva Dal

The membership continued to increase and eleven new branches were opened. The strength of these branches varied from 25 to 30.

Pursuant to the All-India Congress Committee resolution adopted on 9th March 1947, the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee, at its meeting held at Mulund (Thana) on 30th March 1947, appointed a Maharashtra Provincial Congress Seva Dal Board, to draft to a new constitution for the Dal. At its Poona meeting, held on 20th April 1947, the Executive Committee of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee approved the constitution drafted by the Board in its meeting held on 19th April 1947 and directed the Board to conduct all Seva Dals as laid down in the constitution. The Executive Committee further warned that all those who would conduct or join other unauthorized Seva Dals would commit a breach of Congress discipline.

This move of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee to take over the control of the Seva Dals has been resented by the socialist rank and file in the existing Rashtra Seva Dals, and as a protest, Messrs S.G. Ranade, present Seva Dal Chief, and S.M. Joshi did not attend the Board's meeting although specially invited.

Mr K.M. Jedhe, the President of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee, has in this connection issued a statement clarifying the stand taken by the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee and requesting all Seva Dal workers and volunteers to commence work according to the new constitution.

A private meeting of about 800 Seva Dal workers from all over Maharashtra was held in the Congress House, Poona, on April 12th and 13th, under the presidentship of Mr S.G. Ranade, the present Dal Chief, to discuss whether or not the Rashtra Seva Dal, which was so far a separate entity, though owing allegiance to Congress, should totally abide by the rules and regulations passed by the Board. It was decided to continue the independent existence of the Dal without Congress intervention in its day-to-day working. The meeting further opined that (1) two of its representatives should be taken on the Controlling Board, (2) the Dal Chief should be of their choice, and (3) no member of the Controlling Board should be allowed to contest any elective post in the Congress organization.

A split between the rightist and leftist workers of the Rashtra Seva Dal appears to be inevitable and it is learnt that the leftists intend to organize their own Rashtra Seva Dal independent of Congress control.

(2) Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh

Seven new branches were opened. Their strength varied from 20 to 35.

The chief activity of the Sangh during the month was the observance of the 'New Year Day' (Gudhi Padva). Private rallies of volunteers ranging between 50 to 3,000 were held in almost all the Maharashtra districts and Ahmedabad when speeches were made by local leaders explaining the significance of the day and advising the volunteers to sink their differences and to strengthen the organization. The rally at Poona on 23rd March 1947 was the biggest. About 3,000 volunteers performed the flag salutation and gave demonstration in physical exercises under the presidentship of Mr Govardhandas Dayalshet of Bombay. Mr V.G. Apte, the City Organizer of the Sangh, addressing the gathering recalled the Muslim onslaughts on Hindus in the Punjab and Bengal and said that amongst the several Hindu organizations, the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh had the courage to protect the Hindus. The Hindu society talked of retaliation but made no preparation. Unfortunately, power had been vested in the hands of deceitful Hindus—Congressmen—who were worse than those who committed atrocities on Hindus. The Hindu Society therefore, he said, looked to the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh for its safety and protection.

Mr Apparao Joshi of Wardha (CP) addressing about 2,000 volunteers of the Sangh in camera at the Nuten Marathi Vidyalaya High School, Poona, on March 10th, said that Congress had fallen a prey to the Muslim League and that the Congress Ministries were resorting to repressive policy against the Hindu organizations like the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh. They should bear in mind that more the repression the more the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh would grow. The Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh did need such calamities to prove its mettle.

The Sangh volunteers at Sangamner (Ahmednagar) took keen interest in the Hanuman Rath procession taken out on 5th April 1947. They played lezim and shouted slogan 'Hindustan-Hai-Hinduoka, Nahi-Kisike-Bapka' which created a slight tension amongst the local Muslims. The volunteers were checked in time by the Police and the procession passed off peacefully.

On 9th April 1947, Mr S.J. Joshi, a Hindu Sabha worker from Belgaum, visited the Sangh branch at Bagalkot (Bijapur) and addressed the volunteers to be well prepared to guard their hearths and homes in the event of a communal aggression.

(3) Muslim National Guards

Two new branches were opened, the strength of which was 20 and 200. The Captain of the Guards and a few other leaders are endeavouring to whip up enthusiasm but without any appreciable result.

The internal dissensions among the top-rank Muslim National Guards of Broach City have taken an ugly turn. The orders of the Salar-e-Shahar, Broach City, to work as volunteers in the Local Board elections on 17th February 1947, were disregarded by some of the Guards. The defaulters were subsequently dismissed under orders from the Provincial Muslim National Guards office. Their request for reconsideration of their case was rejected and they were asked to prefer an appeal to the All India National Guards office if they so desired.

At Ahmednagar the Guards hold route marches on Panchpir Chavdi Road every night. Muslim boys who are either servants in private shops or wanderers participate.

League flag salutations was performed by about 400 Guards, at Poona, on 23rd March 1947 under the presidentship of Mr A.A. Khan. Addressing the gathering he observed that the Muslim League had become strong within six months and that they would achieve their

goal of Pakistan within a year. He exhorted the Muslims to join the League and the Muslim National Guards.

At a similar function at Lonavla, Poona District, organized on the same day, about 40 Muslim National Guards gave a demonstration in drill. Mr Mirza, who presided, urged the Muslims to strengthen the Guards and threatened social boycott against those Muslims who would absent themselves on such functions.

At Godhra, old volunteer organization has been dissolved and fresh enrolment commenced. About 200 Muslims have so far joined the new organization of the Muslim National Guards. The new entrant has to take an oath before a Committee consisting of five persons. The Committee contemplate to enrol about 500 guards for active work and has requested the local City Muslim League to donate Rs 10,000 for the use of the Guards.

In Bombay City, the Guards mainly kept order at various Muslim functions. A member of the Guards was arrested on April 21st for an offence under section 307, Indian Penal Code, as he is alleged to have instigated a Muslim to stab a Hindu passer-by on January 29th.

(4) **Khaksar Volunteer Corps**

After a couple of months inactivity, the Khaksars at Ahmednagar revived their activities on 19th March 1947. In observance of the 'Ganj Shahada' a cycle procession of about 12 Khaksars was taken out in Ahmednagar City with a flag having words 'Akhwat' written on it. The demonstration was peaceful.

(5) **Samata Sainik Dal**

The volunteers of the Dal participated in Dr B.R. Ambedkar's birthday celebrations held at Ahmedabad between April 14th and 20th.

(6) **Hindu Rashtra Dal**

A new branch of the Dal has been opened in Bombay City and about 20 volunteers attend it.

As a result of certain dissensions a rival branch has been started under the name of 'Hindu Rashtra Seva' with about 25 volunteers.

(7) **Lok Sena**

Owing to internal disputes, the branch at Sholapur has been closed for the present.

(8) **Azad Hind Dal**

A new branch of the Dal has been formed in Bombay City with 20 volunteers.

As a result of the bickerings between the President and the Organizer and Instructor of the Dal, all the branches of the Dal in Poona are now defunct.

NB. There was no appreciable activity by the other Volunteer Organizations.

8. Report from Sind Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Sind for the Second Half of April 1947, 3 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.

...Note showing the development of volunteer organizations in Sind Province

1. **Muslim National Guard:** The strength of the Guard is increasing and members carried out exercises with 'lathis' and drilled in military formation at several places

throughout the province and also held meetings. At Sukkur an ex-police constable has been appointed to instruct members of the Guard in police duties. A branch of the Guard has been formed at Shikarpur and has about fifty members on its rolls at present.

2. This habit of parading through streets attracted a great deal of notice and criticism in Karachi and with a view to preventing trouble the District Magistrate sent for the leaders and advised them to have this parading stopped. At the first meeting they agreed to reduce it to one parade a month, the route of which was to be notified to the authorities and a permit for which was to be taken out from the Superintendent of Police. Subsequently, the District Magistrate suggested that parading in streets should cease altogether, and the suggestion was accepted subject to the condition that the agreement will be implemented within a week.
3. There has been a rift between the branch of the National Guards in Karachi on account of differences between the City leaders. The Guard is being re-organized and the re-organization is expected to take about a couple of months.
4. **Rashtrya Swayam Shewak Sangh:** The Sangh carried out its usual physical exercises and drills in military formation. It celebrated 'Vesakhi Day' at Karachi on the 13th and 14th April. A meeting was held at Hyderabad at which the attendance numbered about 1,000 and where speeches were delivered on the present political situation in India in general, and at Hyderabad in particular, stressing the need for recruiting and training more members for the protection of Hindus in case of communal riots.
5. At Sukkur, on the 13th April, a clash occurred between members of the Sangh and the Rashtrya Sewa Dal over the use of a playground for their routine activities. Wiser counsels prevailed and the incident was nipped in the bud. On the 12th, a Muslim donkey cart driver was loading sand and stones into his cart from the New Model High School Ground at Karachi when 30 Hindu boys alleged to be members of the Sangh took exception to it. Nothing untoward, however, occurred. On the 13th, the school ground was the scene of another incident. About 200 members of the Sangh had assembled there to celebrate the 'Vesakhi' festival. Five Muslim National Guards were watching the Sanghatis and the latter noticing them, asked them to quit the place. The Guards refused to do so. But the Sanghatis observing that discretion was the better part of valour, let the Guards alone.
6. Reports received indicate that the Sangh has decided to change its name to 'Hindu Dharam Sangh' in the event of its being banned by Government. At Sukkur, a subsidiary body known as the 'Hindu National Guard' has been established with a view to carry on the mission of the Sangh when and if the latter is declared an illegal body. The members of the Guard are none other than the Sanghatis themselves, and for all practical purposes the guard is identical with the Sangh.
7. **Rashtrya Shewa Dal:** Physical exercises and drill in military formation formed the main feature of the activities of the Dal during the fortnight under review. About 1,000 members from various places in the Province attended the meeting organized by the Dal at Shahdadpur in the newly-created Sanghar District on the 6th April where about 200 of them gave exhibitions of physical feats and 'lathi' practice. Speeches were also made in a pro-Congress strain.
8. **Khaksars:** Batches of Khaksars numbering from five to about fifty carried on routine activities and drilled in military formation with 'belchas'. A branch of the Khaksar

Jamait has recently been formed at Shikarpur, and at a meeting of this branch Muhammad Inayatullah condemned the Muslim League and Congress for their capitalistic policy and the former in particular for exploiting all avenues to destroy the Hurs, and also alleged that the Muslim League was a body of British agents. This organization also indulged in a novel form of propaganda of writing slogans on the wall in Urdu with coal tar.

9. **The Arya Vir Dal:** This defunct Hindu organization has been revived and its activities have so far been confined to the performance of physical exercises.

9. Report from CP and Berar

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on CP and Berar for Second Half of April 1947, 6 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.

....5. Volunteer Organizations:

Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh: Four new branches were started, 2 in Balaghat, one in Bilaspur and one in Jubbulpore district. The new most important Sangh gathering was the camp at Pardi in the Nagpur district from the 3rd to the 5th April. The camp was attended by about 6,000 uniformed volunteers who were housed in 100 tents pitched for the purpose. All the paraphernalia of a military camp were maintained, such as bugle calls, guards, camp police etc. Mr Golwalkar, the head of the organization, addressing the volunteers said that India was the home of the Hindus, that the Moguls and others were foreigners, that the Hindus should discard their inferiority complex and exert themselves to arouse among the Hindus a sense of realism.

Azad Hind Dal: Three new branches were established during the month. Nagpur, Kamptee and Katni branches performed squad drill regularly. There was a camp attended by 60 Azad Hind Dal volunteers at Ramtek, under the command of G.A. Kirde and G. Ingle Ex-INA men. This camp was run on military lines and the main item of the programme was drill. Some 150 uniformed volunteers of the Nagpur branch of the Azad Hind Dal formed a guard of honour to Prithvi Raj, the cinema actor who came to play the part of the hero in the play called 'Deewar' and who unfurled the Congress flag.

Muslim National Guards: Two new branches were formed at Jamai (Chhindwara) and Amraoti. Routine activities consisted mainly of drill, lathi, dagger and other physical exercises. They participated in the observance of 'Pakistan' Day.

Hindustan Red Army: Physical exercises and drill were performed at Wardha and Tumsar.

Hindustan Sewa Dal: Two branches were established in Bilaspur and Wardha. Training in lathi and other physical exercises was given at Bilaspur. Camps were held in Narsinghpur, Sakoli and Gumgaon (Nagpur). Inaugurating the camp at Gumgaon, Poonamchand Ranka described the Dal as the official organization of the Congress and advised the volunteers to serve the country, observe discipline and increase the number of branches. Instructions were given in map reading and in maintaining peace during communal disturbances.

Samata Sainik Dal: A new branch was opened at Yeotmal. The Dal is active only in the Chanda district consisting largely of Mahars....

10. Report from Punjab Province

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on Punjab for the Second Half of April 1947,
7 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/4/47, NAI.

...VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS: The steadily increasing appreciation of the Hindu community for the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh has recently been most clearly expressed by the increasing number of enlistments and by the response to the Sangh's appeal for funds, ostensibly for refugees relief, both of which have been particularly marked in the central and eastern Punjab. The devotion of Sangh members to the collection of funds and relief work however has not detracted from their more militant activities, and the performance of physical exercises, gatka and lathi fighting is becoming more regular. In Amritsar, Sangh members were concerned in a bomb case and while this incident may not be a safe indication that the RSSS as an organization has commenced a programme of terrorism, it is clear that its workers are adopting a more aggressive attitude and are being more blatant about keeping articles which can be used for offensive and defensive purposes. The Ambala Cantonment branch recently demonstrated 'riot tactics' which caused considerable panic in the Muslim localities into which they ventured, and action u/s 21 of the Punjab Public Safety Act had to be taken against three Sangh leaders of Sirsa who were exhorting Hindus to collect arms and to prepare to fight the Muslims. In Karnal, Sangh workers are being provided with lathis, and hockey sticks have been distributed to Batala members. The Multan branch continues slowly to equip itself with hatchets and the Dera Ghazi Khan with knives. It is now believed that instructions issued to the RSSS enjoin complete cooperation between the RSSS and the Arya Vir Dal and close collaboration with the Sikhs. An early outcome of this policy has been the enlistment in the Sangh of a number of Sikhs in Hoshiarpur district.

The harvest has interfered with the progress in the enrolment of members of the Akal Saina, but thirteen new branches have recently been formed in nine districts and membership has increased by nine hundred and fifty. Enlistment has been rapid in the Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana, Gurdaspur, Lyallpur and Multan districts, and SA Dal workers, are now touring and organizing formations of the Akal Fauj which they hope to complete within two to three months. There is less activity in the western districts but, in common with the RSSS, training on more militant lines is discernible in the eastern Punjab, particularly in Ambala. A new volunteer corps has now been formed at Amritsar, the Shahidi Dal, under the direction of Jathedar Mohan Singh, which aims at having a corps of picked Sikhs available to deal with Muslim 'aggression' there. The present strength is estimated at between three and four hundred. A SGPC Fauji Guard, eventually to consist of 750 Sikhs, enlisted from ex-military, Akali and INA ranks, has also been formed in Amritsar. Two hundred Guards have so far been enlisted, of whom about 125 have been sent to various gurdwaras for protection duties. Before they go out, these Guards have to undertake in writing to remain faithful to the Panth and obey the orders they receive implicitly.

The necessity for recruitment and reorganization of the Muslim League National Guards is occupying the attention of the Provincial Salar, who has compared the progress of the organization most unfavourably with that of the RSSS and the Akal Fauj. An increase of 6630 Guards, however, has been reported and accelerated activity has been noticeable in the western and north-western Punjab. In the eastern Punjab, active training has been confined mainly to

Simla, Ambala Cantonment and Panipat, where Guards have been exercised secretly in lathi fighting, and, in the central Punjab, to the Jullundur district where Khaksars have undertaken their training. Open activity has been confined to the collection of relief funds, reorganization and, in the Rawalpindi area to warning Muslims to destroy looted property and refrain from giving evidences in connection with the recent disturbances. A rift in the Provincial Muslim League National Guards organization, caused by dissension in the Punjab Muslim League High Command, is hampering progress and the Provincial Salar has been subjected to severe criticism of having taken no active steps to protect the Muslim community during the recent communal riots. ...

11. All India Dharmasangh Launches a New Campaign

Extracts from a Memorandum from the Hindu Citizens of Delhi, 17 May 1947

Confidential Branch, File No. F44/47-C. 1947, Chief Commissioner's Office, Delhi State Archives.

Memorandum for Redress of Grievances of Volunteers of Dharmayudha Peaceful Campaign by The Hindu Citizens of Delhi through Shastrartha Maharathi Pt Madhavacharya Shastri

To
The Chief Commissioner
Delhi Province
Delhi.

Sir,

The All India Dharmasangh, under the leadership of His Holiness Shri 1008 Swami Karpatriji Maharaj, one of the Greatest Hindu leaders and a saint of very high spiritual order, launched the Dharmayudha Campaign on the 28th of April 1947. It is said that previous to the actual start of the campaign repeated representations were made to members of the Central Government, especially Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and Dr Rajendra Prasad, to bring home to them the five fundamental demands of the Hindus. The five demands are as follows:

- (1) Cow-protection—by banning cowslaughter throughout India on religious, social, physical and economic grounds. This step to begin with Muttra, the birth place of Lord Kishena Gopal, the protector of cows.
- (2) Akhand Bharat, dropping all schemes of vivisection of our Motherland.
- (3) Religion be left Independent—There should be no legislative interference in religious, socio-religious and religio-social affairs of Hindus. In this respect only great scholars and acharyas, educated on oriental lines, are entitled to define religion and say whether a particular matter is religious or not.
- (4) Sanctity of temples to be maintained according to agelong traditions and Shastric injunctions. All legislation in this respect, to be dropped.
- (5) Adequate representation of the Sanatani Hindus on the constitution making body and all its committees.

His Holiness Shri Karpatriji was arrested along with 58 other volunteers, who were demonstrating peacefully outside assembly chamber and Shri Swamiji accompanied them still

to find another chance of constitutional settlement to attract the attention of the members of the constituent assembly. But it seems, the Government considered it fit to arrest the peaceful demonstrators instead of giving them any hearing. Since then the volunteers have been daily demonstrating before the assembly chamber, viceregal lodge, Secretariat and residences of Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel.

It was demanded by the whole of Hindu community throughout India through telegrams to His Excellency the Viceroy, Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and even the Secretary of State to release Shri Swamiji and his followers forthwith and to give them an assurance of the acceptance of their demands. It is a pity that the demand of the Hindu public has also gone unheeded and now we listen to the reports of maltreatment of these peace loving volunteers at the hands of police and Jail Authorities....

It is further requested that your honour may advise the Central Government to accept their most legitimate fundamental demands and drop all sort of legislation interfering with religious life of the Hindus.

We believe that this will all bring good will to the Government as well as good name to your goodself along with heartfelt gratitude of us all.

We have the honour to be
Sir,

Yours obediently,
Madhavacharya

For the Hindu Citizens of Delhi

12. Activities of Volunteer Armies in NWFP

Letter from Olaf Caroe to Louis Mountbatten, 17 May 1947

TOP, Vol. X., pp. 874-5.

PESHAWAR,

TOP SECRET

D.O. No. G.H. 57.

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Your Excellency will remember that on the second day of the Governors' Conference the question of private armies was discussed and we were invited to keep you informed and to put forward ideas about their abolition. It was also stated that you had decided to raise the question at the coming Conference with the leaders. During your visit to Peshawar I told you that my Ministry were pressing me to have a Home Guard, and also to distribute official rifles to this Guard. I resisted this, for I was quite sure at the time that they intended to use the rifles for distribution to Red Shirts, and this has now been proved.

2. While I was away in Delhi some official police rifles were issued in one District, namely Peshawar, and these have all gone to Red Shirts, who are parading them about and form armed guards when the Congress leaders go to meetings. Dr Khan Sahib always pretends that Red Shirts are unarmed, but it is false, and entirely reliable sources confirm that the great majority of Red Shirts, particularly in the Charsadda area of Peshawar District, are very well armed indeed with 303 rifles from the Kohat Pass, most of them unlicensed. They have even been seen armed in Peshawar Cant[onment].

3. On top of that we have this new formation of 'Young Pathans'. Dr Khan Sahib again when I raised the matter tried to pretend, even in Council, that he knew nothing about it, but it is now confirmed by open announcement by Abdul Ghaffar Khan that this party has been raised with his blessing to form bodyguards and to 'resist aggression' as a sort of counter to the League movement. The chief organizer is Abdul Ghaffar Khan's son, Abdul Ghani, the MLA (Central). I have already reported this move by telegram and it is dangerous. There is already a counter movement by the League to set up their own armed organization. We have reached the strange position whereby the Government of the day has two armed organizations: one a sort of *corps d'elite* (its SS) which is acknowledged to be armed and another, the Red Shirts (its SA) who are known to be widely armed. In some cases the weapons may be licensed, and I am afraid it is the case that my Premier issues licenses to his own supporters with no discretion whatever in hundreds. There are cases also of unlicensed arms, for which only permits are given. The arms themselves can be got from the Kohat Pass factories, which are working overtime. It seems to me that if a responsible Government adopts measures of this kind, we are driven to think seriously once more how far it will be possible to leave it in office. How are we to hold any form of election or referendum with private armies going up and down the country? The logical course would no doubt be to declare at any rate the 'Young Pathans' an unlawful association under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, but that would have to be done by the Provincial Government itself. (I suppose it is conceivable that I take action myself in exercise of my special responsibility, but even that is a *reductio ad absurdum*.)

4. A certain amount of this may be regarded as a war of nerves, and a demonstration to set off the League meetings in Peshawar at the end of April. But it will be noticed that it all follows on the rather obscure threat uttered by Qazi Attaullah at the meeting of Ministers which Your Excellency saw in Peshawar on April 28th—a threat which was repeated in the Ministry's comments on the minutes of that meeting.

Yours sincerely,
OLAF CAROE

13. Report from NWFP

Extract from the Fortnightly Report on NWFP for the First Half of May 1947, 27 May 1947

Home Poll (I), File No. 18/5/47, NAI.

...Note showing the Development of Volunteer Organizations in the NWFP during the month of April 1947

RED SHIRTS. The Red Shirts were active during April, especially in the Mardan and Bannu Districts, marching in processions and attending party meetings. Active members of the organization fluctuate in number to some extent, but are estimated at about 8,000. An offshoot of the organization has been formed, to which the name 'Zalmai Pakhtun' has been given. This body has been declared to be armed for self-defence and for the defence of party leaders in the present disturbed conditions of the Province. Its members are reported at present to be about 50.

MUSLIM LEAGUE NATIONAL GUARDS. The exact strength of this organization also is not known, more especially since at demonstrations they are mingled with other supporters of the Muslim

League. The probable figure is 5,500. It is noticeable that Muslim League National Guards took a prominent part in the Dera Ismail Khan Civil Disobedience Campaign, which developed into very grave communal rioting. The leaders have always emphasized the necessity of not persecuting minorities, but experience has shown that the danger of communal trouble is inherent in the activities of this body.

KHAKSARS. Their strength is estimated at 1,200. There have been a few parades and small batches left the Province for Bihar for volunteer work. No breach of the peace has been threatened from them recently, but their past history and present organization render the Khaksars a potential menace to law and order.

AHRARS. They are estimated to number 200, but they may become even fewer as the result of the recent decision of the party to sever connection with Congress. They carry little influence in the Province, although one leader, Maulvi Ghulam Ghaus of Baffa, Hazara District, is believed to have initiated a no-rent campaign in the south west of the District and adjacent independent areas. This campaign has so far made little headway.

RSS SANGH. Since Hindus are a very small minority of the population of the Province, this organization is not a serious threat to public tranquility. But its volunteers number 2,000; it holds frequent rallies; and is an object of suspicion on the part of the Muslim League.

14. 'Hindustan National Guard in Bengal: Dr Mookerjee's Appeal for Men & Money'

Hindustan Standard, 28 May 1947.

Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee has issued the following statement:

'The Hindusthan National Guards was formed by me in Bengal as the President of the Hindu Mahasabha nine months ago to work for the protection of the Hindus and for helping in the maintenance of peace and order. In recent months, the response from the citizens of Calcutta and from other parts of Bengal has been most encouraging.

'Our organization is functioning under the auspices of the Hindu Mahasabha but it is open to all Hindus irrespective of party politics who share our aims and objects and are willing to join hands in this supreme crisis facing all peace-loving citizens of the province. It is only a united and disciplined organization actuated by true spirit of courage and service that can save Calcutta and Bengal.

'I appeal to all sections of Hindus to rally round the banner of the Hindusthan National Guard and make it a force which will effectively checkmate and disintegrate all reactionary elements that are working for violence, disorder or anarchy. We have to resist at all cost the growing menace that threatens the sanctity of our hearths and homes and the honour of our womenfolk. All those who are ready to join this force in this supreme emergency will get in touch with our head office or any of our branches in Calcutta and in districts.

'I appeal to all public spirited citizens who are willing to help us with contributions to come forward and contribute generously to the Hindusthan National Guard Fund.

'Contribution earmarked for this purpose may be sent to any of the following addresses:

'(1) Treasurer, Hindusthan National Guard, Ashutosh College, Russa Road, Calcutta; (2) Treasurer, Hindu Mahasabha, 162, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta; (3) Mr N.C. Chatterjee, Working President, Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha, 5 Theatre road, Calcutta.'—API.

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